NANNIE'S HAPPY CHILDHOOD

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN & CO.

Sent to R. R. L. 9/25/30

REFERENCE LIBRARY OF
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
2 PARK STREET, BOSTON

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE SHELVES
EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF
THE LIBRARIAN

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.
Archive
Collection

This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

Mrs. Caroline L. Field.

HIGH-LIGHTS. A Novel.
NANNIE'S HAPPY CHILDHOOD. Illustrated.
THE UNSEEN KING, AND OTHER VERSES.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OLD (page 4)

NANNIE'S HAPPY CHILDHOOD

BY

CAROLINE LESLIE FIELD

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge

COPYRIGHT, 1899, BY CAROLINE LESLIE FIELD

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Prince Quirlicue	1
II.	The Beautiful Princess	18
III.	Some One Else	31
IV.	Spellbound	50
V.	Talismans	70
VI.	Making Friends	79
VII.	The Forest Path	87
VIII.	The Pumpkin Coach	97
IX.	In the Beast's Garden	115
X.	Cinderella's Ball	129
XI.	Happy New Year	141
XII.	"Farewell"	148

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OLD" (page 4) *Frontispiece*

"STOOD STOCK-STILL FOR A MOMENT" 48

"BETWEEN GREAT PEARLY GATES" 110

"THE BIG BRIGHT TEARS . . . SPRANG TO HER EYES" . . 154

NANNIE'S HAPPY CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER I

PRINCE QUIRLICUE

It was late October. The leaves of the great ashes and elms, instead of waving and fluttering in all their green, brave beauty far above Nannie's head, lay in brown windrows along the lane; and Nannie's small feet went wading about among them with great access of glee to their owner, notwithstanding — indeed because of — the crisp manner in which the poor dry things rustled their unavailing remonstrance. The ruling passion is said to be strong in death, and it had been the ash leaves' ruling passion to overtop as much of the world as possible. Hence they found it doubly mortifying and dreadful to be trodden underfoot by such very shabby little boots. Nannie's boots were apt to be shabby; they were persistent travelers always, and dust or dew mattered little to them. Then they were well acquainted with every old apple-tree in the orchard,

and the stone wall was their most intimate friend; so that, since boots and people are known by the company they keep, it was small marvel that they should daily become more seedy and disreputable, quite lose their self-respect in the matter of buttons, and cause Nurse Craik to exclaim, with uplifted hands, over their want of sole, and general depravity, as they stood in jaunty defiance before her on the hearth-rug when day was done, and the restless little feet that had urged them on to their destruction lay curled away and quiet, for a wonder, beneath the soft, warm blankets.

For a little body with such active feet, Nannie had a very dreamy head. No one would ever have found this out by looking at the back of it, for the bright brown curls, when not just from under Nurse Craik's smoothing hand, were always in the most fly-away fluff imaginable. But framed in by these same unruly locks, and half hidden under the sheltering hat, such as children wore in those days, was a little picture of a face with shy, dark eyes, and long, curling lashes, and a mouth set in soft, grave curves that seldom gave way so far as to reveal the wealth of pearls within; yet, when it did yield, yielded heartily, to the accompaniment of as merry a peal as one would wish to hear.

She was not laughing now, but the face under the big hat was a very happy and absorbed face indeed. The crisp rustling and crushing of those brown leaves was too delicious! Slowly, along the winding lane, went the dusty little boots; now shuffling ankle-deep, now crossing over to where, on the other side, under sheltering bushes, lay yet deeper and more tempting drifts. The lane was a charming place to Nannie on that October morning. Along the north side of it rose an abrupt ridge of land overgrown with locust, wild cherry, and apple-trees, and great clumps of barberry bushes, over which catbriar and wild grapevine ran riot in summer, though now there was only the yellow network of their stems twisting and tangling everything together into such a wild web as only a reckless little spider like Nannie would ever have dreamed of creeping through. *She* crept through it nearly every pleasant day of her life.

On the south side of the lane, for half its length, lay the carefully kept acres of Grandfather Gladwin's farm, near one corner of which opened a great gate, with the long driveway winding pleasantly round till it wound out, at another great gate, and lost itself in the main road. Near this second gate stood the house, — a large, low house, more

than a hundred years old. Nannie used to wonder sometimes why almost every one who passed by, in summer, lingered and looked in beneath the sheltering branches of the two grand elms that sentineled the entrance. But there was in the look of the rambling old dwelling a something so roomy and rich, so suggestive of cheer and hospitality within, of comfortable plenty and well-to-do-ness without, that one paused involuntarily to see how freely the summer sunshine and sweet, soft air found their way through wide-flung doors and windows, to hear the crowing of self-satisfied cocks in the barnyard, — full, deep-chested crows as from fowls that knew no lack of golden grains, — and to smell the spreading sweetness of the great pink roses that ran riot over porch and windows, giving to the quaint, low-browed building the semblance of a smiling old lady with rosy, wrinkled cheeks. To Nannie, indeed, it looked like nothing so much as an old gentleman, — as Grandfather Gladwin himself, in his wide-brimmed gray felt hat.

The roses were gone now, and doors and windows mostly closed; but the chickens scratched thriftily in the dry, sheltered barnyard, and the sunshine poured down through bare branches and tangled vine-stems into the lane, embroidering the brown

earth of the roadway with golden threads till it looked like a rich court robe of Genoa velvet.

It had a long train, this robe; it curled away through the pastures, and Nannie followed it. By-and-by it was cut in two by a cross-road; but it began again, bravely, on the other side; and just in the angle of lane and road stood an old, weather-beaten house. In its day it must have been considered a very elegant affair, for instead of sloping off behind in a lean-to, as most of the houses thereabout did, it rose up straight and square to the height of two whole stories, front and back. The porch had fluted pillars to support its somewhat ponderous roof; the wide hall door boasted a grand fan-light, made up of queer-shaped bits of thin, greenish glass; and around door and windows, and all along under the eaves, ran fine quilled work, like the ruffles on Nannie's cambric dresses that Nurse Craik did up so beautifully on her funny little hot scissors.

But if the house had ever resembled the dresses in color, it must have been long, long ago; for now there was not a streak of white to be seen, even in the most sheltered corner. All was dark, dingy gray; wind-swept and rain-beaten. What of that? Its old-time builder and owner might have sighed

could he have seen to what a pass his fine new house had been brought; but Nannie did not care for white paint, — and the sun did not care either. In fact, it would almost seem, from the way in which he poured out his lavish wealth of warmth and glory upon its faded shingles and stained clapboards, as if he preferred it as it was; and when he and Nannie together looked in at the sheltered southeast windows, they saw something which Solomon in all his glory could never have equaled.

Behind the small, square panes of those queer old windows was a perfect wilderness of bloom. Geraniums, roses, heliotropes, abutilons, carnations; the pots stood as close together as they could on the broad sill, on shelves, and brackets, and little round light-stands; and the blossoms grew as close together as they could on every plant.

Nannie, standing on tip-toe, flattened her little nose against the lowest corner pane for a moment, as if she expected to smell the heliotrope through the glass, and then whisked about and ran up the steps of a little corner stoop and into the house.

Within was a square, bare hall, from one corner of which went up a bare, square stairway. This, too, had been elegant in its day, for the banisters were slender and graceful, and the hand-rail

was of dark polished wood; but the white paint on balustrade and stair edges was cracked and darkened by time; and though the heavy brass rods yet held their places, they held nothing else. There had been no carpet beneath them for many years.

Up went Nannie like a scampering mouse, — the shabby boots were worn so limber that they never made any noise, — and found herself in another hallway, much smaller than the first, with closed doors on all sides but one, where there was a window instead. And through this window poured the same glorious sunshine, — and it, too, was gay with plants. The little hallway was as warm and fragrant as May.

But Nannie had not come a-Maying this time. She just put her nose to one white Daphne-star that poured perfume from its tiny alabaster box in gracious prophecy of what would be when its close clustering mates should have unfolded too, and, lifting the latch of a door at right angles to the one she had just closed, scampered up another, and much plainer, flight of stairs which lay concealed behind it. Clearly, she felt herself to be very much at home in the old house.

She was in the garret now; brown, age-worn boards beneath her feet, rough, tough old rafters

overhead, relics of bygone generations all about her. Old things were not the rage in those days; but Nannie was ahead of her time, and they possessed a charm for her such as elegant upholstery could never acquire. For satin-covered chairs and sofas the child felt, without knowing why, an artistic antipathy; but she would stand for minutes — and minutes are long to quick little bodies like Nannie — before an old high-boy or a spindle-legged table, lost in admiration of their quaint, angular outlines and rich, dark coloring. The great wool-wheel, looming up from a dim corner, was a dear old friend. She laid her hand softly on its oil-polished round as she passed by to a yet dimmer corner beyond. She merely touched it, did not twirl it, as most children would have done. It would have seemed almost sacrilege to Nannie. It would have broken up and put to flight forever that vision of the tall, graceful woman with the beautiful face who used to step back and forth, a hundred years ago, drawing out her fine white threads of softest wool; her dark blue gown drooping noiselessly about her, her spotless kerchief crossed upon her breast, and her rich, dark hair clustering in soft curls about her forehead, and coiling heavily around the tall, finely carven tortoise-shell comb which Miss Betty had often shown to

Nannie, laid carefully away, with gown and kerchief and one wavy lock of the wondrous hair, in the high, brass-mounted chest of drawers, below in the long chamber.

If anything lay in that far dark corner, no one would ever have discovered it; but Nannie could see in the dark almost as well as her kitten, and, moreover, she had helped to fill the corner herself; so, with no uncertain gropings, she plumped down on her small knees before a dusky heap of something, and began to fill her brown-checked tyer; gathering it into an impromptu bag with one hand, while with the other she dropped in what seemed to be numerous, dry, and rustling. Another pat for the old wheel, and downstairs went Nannie; down to the bare, square hall, where she fished out a queer old basket from some queer old cupboard, and proceeded to pour her attic treasures into it — butternuts, brown and wrinkled and dry. They made such a noise, tumbling into the basket, that a door opposite the stairs opened, and a lady came out and smiled at Nannie, not at all as if she were surprised to see her there, but rather as if the butternuts had acted the part of gentlemen ushers and announced her to the mistress of the house.

"Cousin Betty," said Nannie, with her eyes on

what she was about, "the Queen wants you to come down and spend the day; and I am going to feed the Prince while you get ready."

Nannie never dreamed of burdening her message with polite proviso, and Miss Betty never dreamed of expecting it. It was a message which traveled up the lane, on an average, about three times a week; and unless Miss Betty were away, which she never was, — or had company, which seldom happened, — she always traveled down the lane in response. Nevertheless, such formalities as had become established must always be gone through with; so Miss Betty replied, for the five hundredth time, —

"Well, Nannie, I don't know that there is anything to prevent. I will just finish watering my plants, and put a little coal on the fire, and change my dress, and then I will be ready. Don't you want a drink from the 'footless fowl'? There 's a fresh pailful, just brought in."

Now Miss Betty's well was the finest in Hilton, and Nannie loved cold water as a cat loves cream. Grandfather Gladwin said that his well would never have held out against Nannie and the drought if there had not been Miss Betty's to fall back upon. But then the Squire himself was a reveler in cold water, and his grand-daughter came honestly by her

love for it. So Nannie seized the "footless fowl," which was her and Miss Betty's name for a cut-glass goblet with its base broken off, and dipped it down into the pure, cold water in the old cedar pail. She held it up to the light, as a wine lover might hold his glass, to see how clear it was and how it sparkled in the sunshine; and then, tipping her head back, like the bon vivant again, or like a chicken, which is much the same thing, she drank slowly and enjoyingly, — letting the delicious coolness trickle down her appreciative little throat until the last drop was drained. Then she set the "fowl" upside down on the table and drew a long breath of satisfaction.

"Rogue Riderhood knew considerable about drinking glasses," she remarked, with a wise nod of her curly head, "but he did n't know much about what to put in 'em. And as for Owen Meredith, our footless fowl beats his all hollow."

Miss Betty laughed, and turned her attention to the little cook-stove, which stood, black and shiny, on the broad, brick hearth in the sunny kitchen; and Nannie ran off, out of the house and down the lane.

It was down the lane in both directions from Miss Betty's abode. Down to Squire Gladwin's one way, down into the woods the other. Nannie went

down into the woods. The lane wound charmingly along between mossy walls and queer old rail fences, all knotted together and upheld by the tangled overgrowth of years and years. Only the bar-places were free, and from most of these the bars had long ago been removed. Nannie wandered on, at her own sweet will, from lane to orchard and from orchard to meadow. This meadow was one of Nannie's chosen haunts. On one side of the narrow, grassy pathway rose a steep pasture ridge overgrown with wild strawberry and blackberry vines. Many a June and September feast had Nannie enjoyed on that sunny slope. The lane ran along its crest, and from the stone wall that bounded it there was a glorious view. All over the town, from the blue hills to the blue sea, one might look, in the intervals of other refreshment. Oh, how sweet those wild berries were! Nannie's little lips smacked softly and unconsciously at the mere memory of them. In summer she had banqueted like an Eastern princess, to the sound of music. Songsters and dancers in green, gold, scarlet, and blue had sung and soared, fluttered and leaped, all about her. Birds, butterflies, and grasshoppers were all gone now, but one friend was left who sang and danced unceasingly. Summer and winter, night and day, singing its liquid song,

dancing its gentle measure, with never a harsh note nor an awkward motion, the brook went wandering on; and Nannie loved it best of all. Other friends came and went about it; cowslips in the meadow, anemones among the trees, columbines on the rocks, violets everywhere. One preached cheer, another patience; some whispered courage, some breathed sweet courtesy; but the clear, gliding water filled ear and heart and soul with its ceaseless song of purity and everlasting peace.

Where the brook crossed the pathway it spread out broad and shallow; and here the pathway also crossed the brook, by means of large flat stepping-stones. The largest of all, in the very middle of the brook, could have told many a story of Nannie's childish thoughts had it been so minded; but stepping-stones are no gossips, and the patient moss-grown slab never betrayed how many times the active little feet had stayed their journeying on its friendly surface, resting motionless and forgotten while Nannie's eyes were drinking in the woodland beauty everywhere displayed before them; and Nannie's mind, no less active than her feet, was absorbing and storing away untold riches of thought and knowledge, and growing larger in the act than anybody dreamed. If grown people only knew what

wisdom often runs about under checked tyers and broad-brimmed hats!

Just beyond the brook the land began to rise again, and here, at the entrance to a long, lonely wood-path, stood a group of oak-trees. Aborigines, these, beneath whose shade Indians, hunters, wood-cutters, and haymakers had successively found rest and refreshment for two hundred years. There was only Nannie, and one queer friend of hers, who cared to rest beneath them now. The friend, indeed, had his residence in the oldest and largest of them, and when Nannie came along the meadow-path, his bright eyes spied her before she crossed the brook. Down the tree he came, scampering to meet her, his fluffy gray tail waving over his back, and his eager little mouth fairly watering for the butternuts that he knew were ready for him. He had acorns, of course, and shagbarks and corn laid by in store for the long, stormy days when Nannie could not come; but Miss Betty's butternut-tree was the only one in the neighborhood. It had been brought from a distance and set out in the front yard when Miss Betty was a child. And to Prince Quirlicue, as Nannie called him, butternuts meant all that a box of Huyler means to you and would have meant to Nannie, if Huyler had ever been heard of in those days. But,

eager though he was for his feast, Prince Quirlicue had royal manners and would by no means allow his appetite to get the better of his courtesy until he had testified his pleasure in the meeting by running all over Nannie's brown jacket and poking his nose lovingly into her face. Then he seated himself demurely on her shoulder, and waited.

"Prince," said Nannie, rustling the contents of her pocket with one hand and scratching his head gently with the other, "don't you want some butternuts?"

Truly polite as he was, there was not an atom of false delicacy about the Prince. He waited to be asked, but he waited no longer. Down he plunged, head first, into the pocket, seized a big nut and whisked back to Nannie's shoulder, where he nibbled a hole in his carved box of dainties and helped himself to the contents with great satisfaction. Ten times he dived into the pocket, and ten times he feasted on what he found there. Then Nannie said: —

"Now, dear Prince, I must go; for Cousin Betty will be waiting, and the Beautiful Princess will be ready to hear my geography lesson. You may come with me as far as the hollow birch, but not a step beyond, or the fairy Malevola will catch you, and

then what should I do? She is a dreadful creature, Prince!" (Nannie was pacing slowly back along the meadow-path, and Quirlicue still sat happily upon her shoulder, his gray tail waving across her sunny curls.) "She takes all sorts of shapes. Sometimes she rushes along the lane in the form of a yellow dog; I've seen her; and sometimes she prowls along walls and fences, for all the world like a great gray cat. But don't you trust her, Prince, whatever you do! All she wants is to catch you and eat you up, and then she would be Queen of all the forest. She has turned you into a squirrel, and that is bad enough; but you shall have plenty of butternuts, and who knows but that some day you will become a real prince again and marry a princess? Only I don't believe I could ever let my Beautiful be married, even to you; so I guess you 'll have to find one for yourself. Well, here we are at the hollow birch. Now you must run home, and so must I."

The Prince seemed to understand, for he started to his little feet and poised himself for a spring; but waited. Then Nannie drew one more butternut from inside her jacket, and threw it back, along the path, as far and straight as she could. With one leap Prince Quirlicue left her shoulder and fled in pursuit. He seized the nut in his mouth, not waiting

to eat it, and with a parting wave of his tail was off for the old oaks like a silver streak; while Nannie, like a brown one, rushed up the lane and into Miss Betty's kitchen, — her cheeks like roses and her eyes like stars.

CHAPTER II

THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS

"MAY," said the Good Old Queen to the Beautiful Princess, "I think you will have to be a little careful about Nannie. The child reads nothing but fairy tales; and her mind is so saturated with them that she lives in a world which has no real existence."

The Good Old Queen was Nannie's grandmother. Of course, she was not really a queen, any more than the Princess was really a princess, or the old Squire really a king. These were merely titles which Nannie had given them, because she loved them so much and honored them so absolutely that she could find no other names which seemed to her half good enough. And, when you come to think of it, such are the only sort of titles worth having. The Good Old Queen was a very kind, very handsome, and very brisk little body indeed. She was sitting in a low easy-chair, by a bright open fire, knitting busily away on some pretty silk stockings for Nannie her-

self; and as she spoke she looked up at the Beautiful Princess, who was moving about among her plants in the big bay window.

The Princess smiled. She was not a very tall or stately princess, but she had the loveliest eyes and mouth imaginable, and when she smiled it was very easy to see why Nannie called her beautiful. She was only twenty-three, but she was so sweet and wise and good, that when Nannie's father died he left the little sister in the older sister's charge, as well as all the money which belonged to them both, so that even the Good Old Queen felt that she must never interfere with the Princess's management, though she frequently offered suggestions, as she was doing now.

"The child is bewitched, I truly believe! There she lies, on the sofa, perfectly good, perfectly happy; but this world is nothing to her. She hovers continually on the borders of fairyland. The other day I found her trying to compound a magical paste from honey and heliotrope blossoms. It seems this paste must be contained in a 'curiously wrought silver box,' so she had taken Great-grandfather Vivian's queer old snuff-box from the cabinet, and was preparing to fill it with her ingenious compound. 'It does n't smell right, Queen,'

she said. 'It should fill the house with "the fragrance of a thousand flowers," and it does n't at all.'"

The Princess laughed merrily. "That does," she said, holding a sprig of white jasmine to her grandmother's nose. And then she added, "Nannie is not on the sofa now."

"No; I sent her up to Cousin Betty Vivian's with a message. I will say she is the most obliging child I ever saw; always ready to go of an errand; but then she loves to be out of doors. I suppose there are fairies under every bush."

"If Nannie happens to take an interest in the bush, no doubt there are. Really, Grandmother, I think we need not worry. Nan is the healthiest, happiest, sweetest natured child in the world; her small mind is brimful of lovely, loving fancies; and if she likes to individualize things which the rest of the world takes en masse, or ignores entirely, I see no harm in it. I believe in fairy tales myself, and I believe in Nannie. Besides, they are not all she reads, by any means. She is very forward in her studies for a child of her age, only eleven, you know; and her taste in literature is already nice and discriminating."

The Good Old Queen smiled, quite satisfied.

Praise of Nannie suited her well. It would have gone hardly with any one who had seen fit to criticise; that privilege was reserved for herself. Truth to tell, she would have been vastly sorry to see her little favorite one whit altered from her own loving, dreamy self; only once in a while her comfortable conscience pricked her a little, and she wondered if they were doing quite right by the child to allow her to live out her own unique nature so freely. But if Nannie was her pet, the Princess was her ideal, and whatever she said must be right; so the old lady knitted away assiduously on the long blue stocking, and privately resolved that when the dainty hose were finished they should have marvelous clocks embroidered on them, in rainbow tints, such as Cinderella or Graciosa might have worn; for the Queen herself loved a good old fairy story as well as any one, and knew them all by heart. She and Nannie were birds of a feather, if the latter had only known it, and her misgivings over Nannie's irregularities were all the keener sometimes, because in her heart she really would have liked to do the self-same things.

"Never you mind, Wife," the Good Old King would say; "she 's a chip of the old block, and it 's pretty strong stuff; no warp, nor crack, nor cross-

grain to it. It 's a grand, good gift to always see the best in everybody and everything; call it fairies or what you like."

So Nannie went her way unhindered, and grew, bodily and mentally, as only children grow who depend for companionship upon wise grown folks, and wiser Mother Nature, and their own heaven-sent notions, which, when well understood, are often the wisest of all.

The room in which the Good Old Queen and the Beautiful Princess were talking was the Princess's study. When she came to live at the farm with her little sister she took a corner of the rambling old house, which the grandparents had no special use for, and remodeled it to suit herself and Nannie. To reach these rooms you came up a queer little twisting stairway that led from the family sitting-room, and found yourself, all at once, in a small, three-cornered hall, with a window on your right, and a low, broad archway on your left. This archway was closed by heavy dark green curtains. Nannie called it the Portal; and the region beyond was to her the Emerald Palace. Few palaces were ever so cheery and charming. The study, into which you came first, was a large, low-ceiled room, full of the things which both sisters loved. Here

were desks and tables and chairs, with all sorts of spindle-legs, claw-feet, and fiddle-backs; an old, ever so old, inlaid piano, or spinet, with mother-of-pearl keys, which had had its strings all renewed, and gave forth the sweetest of sweet tones beneath the clever fingers of the Princess; and long, low shelves of books running all round three sides of the room, except where they were divided by another curtained archway leading into a bedchamber beyond. Opening from this, in turn, was the nursery, where Nurse Craik sat mending and making for her young mistresses, always ready for the emergencies with which Nannie was sure to vary the monotony of her otherwise peaceful life.

The study carpet was green; not a vivid green, but just that cool, restful shade which deep-wood mosses have; and it was almost as soft and elastic as moss itself. The study table was topped with dark green felt, and near the open fireplace was a generous, roomy old sofa covered with moss-green damask, and well stocked with fat, downy green silk cushions. There were shining brass andirons that described bright arcs before the blazing logs, and a low, heavy fender, with shovel and tongs to match, in their stand near by. There were silver sconces against the walls, that held yellow wax candles; and

a great alabaster globe hanging from the middle of the ceiling, which, when the lamp within was lighted, glowed soft and luminous like a harvest moon. But the most beautiful thing, and that which gave the crowning touch to all the rest, was the great bay window. It was very broad and very deep, with a green-cushioned seat running all round below the diamond-paned sashes; and the whole central space was filled with plants, and ferns, and climbing, twining, wandering vines. They crept all over the archway and window frames, drooped from hanging baskets, and wreathed about the portraits of Nannie's father and mother, which hung on either side of the big bay. With the sun streaming in all day long, a more charming spot could hardly be imagined; it was like a woodland nook; but at evening, when the "moon" was lit and the wax candles burned in the sconces, it was enough like fairyland to justify all Nannie's dreamy fancies. For then every little leaf and twig and flower had its shadows to fling in all directions, till the place seemed almost intangible — airy and unreal as "the stuff which dreams are made of." Then Nannie was in her element; then she would lie for hours among the green silk cushions on the old sofa, and weave in her nimble brain all sorts of charming fantasies as

unreal as the shadows; yet which, like them, could never have been there but for the real things behind them on which the clear light fell; and in the midst of it all, the fairest thing, whether of dream or reality, sat the Beautiful Princess at her old spinet, her fingers wandering over the keys as the vines wandered at their own sweet will, and filling the room with low, dreamy music, that rose and fell like the fitful flames in the chimney, and lulled the little sister into a state of utter blessedness too deep for words; until, when lamplight and firelight and music and shadows began to merge and mingle past any power of hers to disentangle, Nurse Craik would come creeping quietly in, like some wise old fairy, and lure her off to bed.

It would have been difficult for Nannie to tell, had she tried, whether play or work was the more absorbing and delightful, both were so mixed and intermingled. When people play by halves and work by halves, life becomes a tedious drag, which is the secret of a great many dissatisfied souls; but when both occupations are entered upon with such energy as was characteristic of the Gladwin-Vivian connection, they prove to be not only delightful in themselves, but closely interrelated.

Nannie fairly loved the map of Europe. In her

case, perhaps, it would be more correct to say maps of Europe; for not only was there the big general map, which covered the entire surface of the large study table, but on an easel frame near by hung maps of all the separate countries on a large scale; and when the Princess wanted to go from Norway to Russia, or from Russia to Germany, or from Germany to France and England, all she had to do was to fold the great leaves back, letting them hang down behind the frame, until she came to the one she needed. Then there were globes, and a raised map of Switzerland, and various appliances for measuring distances; for the Princess, although not by any means so wealthy as most princesses are supposed to be, had a way of managing their little property which was almost as effectual as a fairy purse. She had been highly educated herself, and now, instead of giving Nannie all sorts of teachers, which would have been very expensive, she merged all the various professorships in one, and filled that one herself. Then she used the money which this arrangement saved in the purchase of books and pictures and music, and the various implements and appliances which make work so much more easy and interesting, and which were fast causing Nannie to be, as the older sister had said, unusually forward

in her studies. For three years past, whenever anyone had asked Nannie what she was studying, she had invariably replied, "Geography."

But in the Princess's hands geography took on a very complex form. It meant not only a topographical study of the earth's surface, but a geological, botanical, zoölogical, and political study of it as well; and when Nannie visited a country, she not only learned what were its principal rivers and mountains and cities, but also who had been chief among its inhabitants, and what had made them so. She learned of the animals, plants, and mineral wealth; and of the general, every-day life of the people; and, in France and Germany at least, she was gradually acquiring a good deal of the language. It was before the days of universal photography; but there were pictures to be had, nevertheless, and the Princess had them, — pictures of natural scenery, of national costumes, and of architecture, painting, and sculpture. Nannie was really making an exhaustive tour of Europe in the company she loved best; and what more delightful thing can a body do?

This morning, when Miss Betty had been safely delivered over to the Good Old Queen, who at once carried her off to her own domain, the two sisters sat down together in the Emerald Palace for their

morning's work. And what do you think the Princess did first? Why, she did just as a street car conductor does; she let all the old passengers get out before any fresh ones got in. That is, she sat down on the big sofa beside Nannie, and heard all about her walk, and Miss Betty's flowers, and the brook, and Prince Quirlicue, before she said one word about lessons; and when all these topics were exhausted and Nannie's small tongue rested for a moment, instead of saying, "Now you must begin to study," she brought from a cabinet drawer a beautiful unset sapphire and laid it in Nannie's hand.

"That came from the great fair at Nijni Novgorod," she said quietly; "and if you will come to the table I will show you where it was bought and what the man looked like who sold it."

Nannie needed no second bidding. In two minutes she was deep in colored prints of Moujiks, Cossacks, Tartars, Turks, Armenians, and Russian Jews. The account of the great market-place, with its vendors of merchandise from all parts of the world, was very entertaining; but one tires of shopping after a time; and when her guide told her that Nijni was but an inferior offshoot from another, far nobler Novgorod, she was quite ready to leave it

behind and turn her seven-league boots toward the northwest.

"Who can resist the gods, and Novgorod the Great?" So runs the ancient saying, and so Nannie found it to be. From the Bazaar to the Archbishop's Palace, the Kremlin, the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and the old bridge over the Volkoff she wandered with the Princess. She heard the story of the city's grandeur and decay; of Martha Beretska and Ivan the Terrible; of Vasili Boulaévitch and his brave body-guard; of the Archbishop Ivan and the miraculous preservation of the beleaguered city; of the radiant vision of Alexander Nevskoi, and the remarkable voyage of St. Anthony the Roman. She saw the quaint tower whence the famous bell once sent its summons forth to convene the great councils, the Vetchés; and she visited the magnificent monasteries across the plain.

"To-morrow," said the Princess, "you shall hear about the common people and their strange superstitions; of Lyeshy the forest sprite, and Vodyany, who lives in the mill-streams; and when I have told you these you shall tell me all you can remember of what we have seen to-day. And now I will read you a quaint old Carpathian song about the creation of the world: —

"Once there was neither heaven nor earth,
Heaven nor earth, but only blue sea,
And in the midst of the sea two oaks.
There sat two pigeons,
Two pigeons on the two oaks,
And began to take counsel among themselves,
To take counsel and to say,
How can we create the world?
Let us go to the bottom of the sea,
Let us bring thence fine sand,
Fine sand and blue stone.
We will sow the fine sand,
We will breathe on the blue stone.
From the fine sand — the black earth,
The cool waters, the green grass.
From the blue stone — the blue heavens,
The blue heavens, the bright sun,
The bright sun, the clear moon,
The clear moon and all the stars."

Nannie was so charmed by this song that she made the Princess read it all over again.

"The blue stone is like my sapphire," she said, breathing gently on the clear gem, as the pigeon had done.

"Your sapphire came from the Carpathian Mountains," said the Princess, "and that is where the song came from, too. I have written it out for you, and you may put both jewels into your treasure-box together."

CHAPTER III

SOME ONE ELSE

THE last withered leaves from a solitary maple-tree were whirling swiftly through the air at the bidding of a brisk November wind.

Brown Pink stood by the window, his shapely little forehead pressed close against the cool glass, and watched them. He was in Miss Dorry's room. It was Miss Dorry who had given him his queer nickname, and she was there, too. She was coloring a photograph. Coloring photographs was her business, and she did it very nicely. Brown Pink liked to watch her at work; the pans of color in her tin case were so pretty, and the patches of color on her little porcelain palette were still prettier; and the soft sable brushes, with their slender red handles, looked so enticing when Miss Dorry dipped them into water and twirled them to sharp, delicate points against the palette. Coloring photographs looked to be very easy work in her hands; but then not every one had such pretty, coaxing

hands as Miss Dorry's. Her face was pretty, too. Brown Pink turned away from his corner of the window, when the last maple leaf had whirled and protested and finally given it up in despair and sunk down upon the bricks of the little courtyard, and began a sober study of the soft, dark hair and eyebrows, and the sweet, firm mouth and chin which he knew by heart already. The eyes he could not see; they were intent upon their work, and the long lashes shaded them; but presently Miss Dorry laid down her brush, with a sigh of relief, and her eyes left the pictured face upon which they had so long rested, and lifted themselves to Brown Pink's. They were dark, too, like the hair, and very clear, and there was a pleasant light in them as they met the little boy's wistful gaze.

"What is it, Männling? Tired of entertaining yourself? Well, I am tired, too, and the daylight is going. Suppose you come and sit in my lap awhile. What have you found out in all this long time at the window?"

Brown Pink climbed contentedly to his questioner's lap, and laid his rosy-brown cheek lovingly against the smooth, fair oval that bent to meet it.

"The poor old maple has lost all its leaves," he said gravely.

"To be sure," said Miss Dorry, regarding the bare branches from behind his curly head; "that is a sign that spring is coming."

Brown Pink raised his head in surprise, and his blue eyes — dark, sparkling blue, like the sea on a breezy day — opened very wide.

"Why, Mamma used to say it was a sign winter was coming; and then she looked real sorry, and breathed a dreadful long breathe — like this. Mamma did n't like winter; it made her cough."

Miss Dorry looked grave for a moment, and although her eyes still turned toward the bare maple boughs, it could hardly have been the sight of them that caused her to gather the little boy closer into her arms, of a sudden, and bestow such a tender kiss upon his upturned, wondering face. But this was only for a moment; the next she was smiling brightly at his puzzled look.

"Brown Pink, when you see Maria stirring up the buckwheat batter to-night, what will it make you think of?"

The puzzled look fled before a jolly little chuckle that discovered a double row of the whitest kind of teeth.

"Griddle-cakes for breakfast, Miss Dorry!"

"Do you like griddle-cakes, Brown Pink?"

An emphatic nod for answer.

"Do you like going to bed?"

"N-no." The brown curls waved dubiously to and fro.

"But when Maria begins to mix the cakes, it is always a sign that bedtime is coming in a minute or two."

"Yes, Miss Dorry," acquiesced Brown Pink soberly. "But then, you know," he added, brightening up again, "the cakes are getting theirselves fixed all the time I am asleep."

Miss Dorry laughed a low, pleased little laugh.

"And so are the leaves 'getting theirselves fixed' all the time the snow is on the ground. The old leaves never drop off until the tree has made all its arrangements for a new supply; and so, when I see the branches bare, I know that there are ever so many little brown buds tucked away under the bark, and by and by, when they all wake up and begin to grow, it will be spring. Why, it would frighten me dreadfully, Brown Pink, if the maple-tree were to hold on to its leaves all winter!"

"And I guess," said Brown Pink, with a sagacious nod of his small head, "it would frighten Aunt Debby dreadfully if I was to stay awake all night."

Miss Dorry laughed. "At least, it would be a sure sign that you could have no buckwheats in the morning; so you see the old maple-tree and the little boy have some things in common, though they are so different in most."

"How many sorts of trees are there, Miss Dorry?"

"How many sorts do you know, Brown Pink?"

"I know maple, and elm, and — let's see — oh, and horse-chestnut! Once when Aunt Debby and I went to ride in the horse-cars we saw some horse-chestnut trees. The leaves were all brown, but there were some prickly balls on 'em, and Aunt Debby said they had brown shiny nuts inside."

Miss Dorry's face grew grave again. She had lived almost all her life in the country, and it seemed a terrible thing to her that a little child should have been shut up, through all his six years of babyhood, to this city street, with its limited vegetation and its unlimited restrictions. Aunt Debby was painfully careful of the child, who was the sole remaining representative of what had once been a large and loving family connection. Plain, nourishing food, warm clothing, and such fresh air as the city could afford, she kept him supplied with scrupulously; otherwise, he could hardly have kept

the healthy color which, in contrast with the clear brown of his skin, had won him Miss Dorry's nickname. But Aunt Debby was lame, and moreover obliged to eke out a scanty income by renting rooms and taking in fine knitting, so that she seldom went from home; and old Maria, the colored cook and maid of all work, grumbled so much over the many unavoidable steps she had to take, that no one dreamed of asking her to take any extra ones. So Brown Pink's active little feet had seldom passed the limits of their own sidewalk, and his knowledge of nature had been chiefly gained from the strip of grass, set with half a dozen struggling young elm-trees which entitled the short side street to be called Warwick Park, and the one big maple in the back yard. There might have been a narrow flower-bed there as well, but Aunt Debby had no time nor strength for gardening, and Maria's floral yearnings were confined to certain gayly impossible blooms, with which, from time to time, she refreshed the roof of her Sunday bonnet. It was a great day for Brown Pink when Miss Dorry took the second-floor back room for the winter. The front room and the little hall bedroom were rented to a single gentleman who took his meals at a house further down the street. In consideration of Miss Dorry's

youth and loneliness, and a certain winning way she had which no one could resist, Aunt Debby had consented, for the first time in her life, to take a stranger into her family circle; and so Miss Dorry ate buckwheats and maple syrup with Brown Pink every morning, and told him stories every evening, and came, in the course of six short weeks, to be the acknowledged sunshine of the house.

This was the time for stories, when daylight was going and lamplight had not come; so presently Miss Dorry, setting Brown Pink on his own feet again just long enough to put away her painting materials and tidy up the table, drew a low chair before the glowing coal fire in the grate, and, gathering the little boy once more into her arms, began that charming old story of "Beauty and the Beast."

And Brown Pink listened. His blue eyes seemed to grow wider and deeper with every word, and the pink in his cheeks ran riot all over the brown, so interested and absorbed he became. The curved lip quivered a little when Beauty found her poor Beast dying; but when he revived, and the story reached its triumphant climax, Brown Pink straightened up with a spring, and clapped his hands in delight.

"Miss Dorry, I think that garden must have been the beautifulest place in the whole world! Only,"

he added thoughtfully, "I don't see why she wanted a rose in the first place. Roses are n't very nice, are they?"

"Why, Brown Pink!" exclaimed Miss Dorry, in great astonishment, "what *do* you mean?"

"I never saw but one," said Brown Pink dubiously and ungrammatically; "I did n't think much of that."

"Where was it, and what was it?"

"It was on Maria's best bonnet, and it was fat and ugly, with bright red and yellow streaks."

How Miss Dorry did laugh! The clear, merry peal went ringing through the quiet little house, making the old bachelor lodger grunt and Miss Debby sigh, and even softening the lines of Maria's rather grim visage as she caught an echo of it in her remote kitchen, though had she known its cause, she would certainly have looked grimmer than ever.

"Brown Pink," said Miss Dorry, as soon as she could speak, "there is something very queer about that rose in Maria's bonnet; it is not in the least like those that grew in the Beast's garden. To-morrow, when I take my pictures back to the studio, I will get a real rose for you."

"Will you? Will it be just like Beauty's?"

"What did I say Beauty's was like?"

"You said it was a great velvety rose, with dew-drops on its leaves," quoted Brown Pink promptly.

"Did I? Well, yours shall be just such another, only I'm afraid I can't quite manage the dewdrops. Ordinary drops from the faucet are not by any means the same thing. We must wait until next summer, Brown Pink."

"Well," assented the child cheerfully, "*that* is n't very long to wait. I've waited 'most six years for the rose, you know."

Miss Dorry laid her face softly down upon the little fellow's bright curls, and they sat together in silence before the warm fire until Maria rang the bell for tea; but if Brown Pink could have seen the back of his head, as he went trotting so contentedly downstairs beside Miss Dorry, he might have found there some queer little round, shining things that were wonderfully like those on Beauty's rose. At all events, they were not ordinary drops.

The next morning brought a great many drops. They hung thick from the twigs of the maple-tree, gathered themselves into sociable puddles in the hollows of the bricked yard, and ran down crooked little pathways of their own finding on the outside of the small, old-fashioned window-panes. Brown Pink amused himself for a good while, after break-

fast, by drawing his forefinger slowly along the glass, inside, and making believe that the drops were sheep, following their stubby little shepherd. Brown Pink's ideas were somewhat clearer on the subject of sheep than on that of roses; for there was a picture in the big family Bible representing the kingdom of the Branch, wherein a curly headed little boy, without much clothing and bearing a striking resemblance to Brown Pink in his flannel shirt, led along a calf with one hand, while, with the other, he calmly stroked the head of an uncommonly venomous looking serpent; at the same time keeping a watchful eye upon the progress in amity of a fierce lion and a meek lamb who had cuddled themselves together, as though they not only meant to lie down, but had serious thoughts of never getting up again. This picture was a whole menagerie in itself to Brown Pink; and he would never allow it to be explained to him, preferring to weave from it for himself an endless romance about a little boy named Oliver, who once spent a whole day amid such congenial surroundings, and his strange, delightful adventures.

Brown Pink had lived until now in two worlds. One a very matter-of-fact world, composed chiefly of bricks, bread and butter, and bed; the other a

fairy realm, stored with every strange and beautiful thing of which he had ever heard or dreamed, and within whose blissful bounds he did exactly as he pleased; while staid Aunt Debby and grumpy, faithful Maria did as they would by no means have pleased, had they only known it. But somehow, since Miss Dorry's advent, his two worlds, which had always been so totally distinct and different, began to undergo a change. Either the one was slowly solidifying and growing real, or the other was dissolving and becoming intangible: which was it? Brown Pink was a child, and therefore a philosopher; he had plenty of thoughts on the subject, but few words to clothe them in, so he kept them to himself, — a nice example, which many a grown philosopher might follow to the edification of a world which is expected to find covering for far too many bare and shivering ideas.

After a while the sheep began to flock so fast that the shepherd lost all run of them, and then they ceased to be individual sheep at all, and became, so to speak, a mass of indiscriminate mutton. Brown Pink turned from the window and watched Aunt Debby's needles. But these pattered almost as fast as the rain, and were an old story besides. He was fain to seek refuge in the big Bible. He did not

turn, as he usually did, to Oliver and his happy family; his choice to-day, owing perhaps to the moist state of the weather, fell upon the travels and adventures of the Noah party. There were several pictures devoted to this topic. First came the building of the ark. There was Father Noah, surrounded by timber enough for a Great Eastern, working away for dear life, and looking as if he thought he had a pretty big contract on his hands. Brown Pink thought so, too. He wondered how one man could ever have accomplished such an amount of hewing, and shaping, and tugging as that wilderness of lumber bore witness to, and was fain to seek advice from Maria on the subject. Maria was strong on biblical matters. She was strong on sponge cake, too, and Brown Pink was glad to find her beating away briskly, yet lightly, at a bowlful of golden foam. Maria was always good natured on the eve of a success. Brown Pink stood watching while she filled the paper-lined tins and popped them into the oven, shutting the door upon them as softly as if they had been sleeping infants. Then he propounded his question.

"Maria, how do you s'pose Noah ever managed to build that big boat? Those are dreadful heavy looking boards, and he did n't have any one to help him."

"Sho', chile, how you do talk! He had de Lord hisself ter he'p 'im. Ye don't s'pose a hun'erd-weight o' tim'er, more er less, is nuffin' fer de Lord ter heft, does ye?"

"But the Lord does n't show in the picture, Maria. It looks as if Noah was doing it all by himself."

" 'Spect likely dat 's de way it looked ter Noah, too; men 's so pesky conceited! But he wa'n't doin' it hisself, fer all dat. Reckon de Lord knows what he 's 'bout. Ef folks could take in all he 's a-doin' fer 'em, dere 's a heap on 'em would squat right down an' nebber lif' a han' deirselves."

"Then what, Maria?"

"Den what, chile? W'y, den dere would n't be but precious little 'complished, I reckon. De Lord he he'ps dem wot he'ps deirselves, honey. Ef we all was ter set down, mebbe he'd set down, too; an' den we *would* all be sot, I reckon! Hi! Run along, chile; my kittle 's b'ilin' dry!"

Brown Pink went back to the old Bible. One thing, if no more, Maria's theology had made clear to him: he might leave Father Noah to the Lord, and reserve his pity for some more needy object. He turned the large leaves slowly till he came to the picture of the dove with the olive-branch. That reminded him of Miss Dorry and the rose. It was

almost time for them to come. He slipped noiselessly out of the room, and went upstairs to await his dove's return.

Now that Miss Dorry was with them, Brown Pink climbed those stairs more frequently than he had ever done before. Aunt Debby's lameness forbade her moving about much, and Maria's orbit lay between the kitchen and the front door. For a sociable little fellow like Brown Pink, the empty upper chambers possessed small attraction. To be sure, the gentleman lodger was there, but then his doors were always closed, and no one felt much acquainted with him, although he had been there now for two winters. It was a great surprise to Brown Pink, as he walked slowly along the entry-way to Miss Dorry's room, to hear a door open suddenly behind him, and a deep voice say, —

"Come back here, boy; I want to see you!"

There stood the old gentleman, as Brown Pink always called him, — though he could not have been much over forty, — in a brown dressing-gown, a book in one hand and his pipe in the other. How he had managed the door-knob under these conditions was a problem Brown Pink strove vainly to solve as he turned, at the bidding of this unlooked-for apparition, which marched back into the front room, leaving him to follow.

"Shall I shut the door, sir, or leave it open?"

Brown Pink was a manly little fellow. Living all alone with Aunt Debby and Maria had made him older than his years in some things; while consorting with David and Daniel and the three Hebrew Children had perhaps done quite as much toward rendering him courageous and self-reliant as knocking about the streets with newsboys and bootblacks could have done. At all events, he stood there quite straight and undaunted, looking squarely into the old gentleman's eyes, which bent themselves upon him in somewhat keen scrutiny; and the old gentleman was pleased.

"Leave it open; leave it open, if you like! I'm tired of being shut up all the time, like a Jack-in-the-box. How comes it that you're round here so often, nowadays? I never used to see you last winter."

"No, sir. Aunt Debby was afraid I might disturb you; and, besides, I had the measles part of the time."

"Had the measles, had you? Well, the mopes are worse than the measles. That's what I have. They aren't catching," he added hastily, with a twinkle in his eyes, as he saw Brown Pink's open a trifle wider than usual; "at least, not for little chaps

like you. But you have n't told me how it happens that you are forever running about here now. Has Aunt Debby concluded that it won't hurt me to be disturbed?"

"Miss Dorry is here now," said Brown Pink, with a little ring of triumphant gladness in his voice.

"Miss Dorry, hey? Is it Miss Dorry who laughs so? I heard some one laughing last night."

"Yes, sir, she laughs. She was laughing at me last night."

"At you, was she? What for?"

"Oh, because I had never seen any roses but the ones on Maria's bonnet. I said I did n't like 'em much."

"Maria? She 's the woman that dusts my room and upsets all my papers, is n't she? I would n't give much for her roses. But how happens it you never saw any others? Roses are plenty."

"Are they? But I guess they don't grow round here, do they? And I never went anywhere but two or three times. Miss Dorry said she 'd bring me one to-day, when she comes back from the studio. And there she is!" cried Brown Pink eagerly, as the front door was heard to close, and a quick, light footfall came over the stairs. "I must go now." And then he checked his first involuntary rush, and

asked, like the little gentleman he was, "Won't you come and see it too, sir?"

The old gentleman laid down his pipe and followed to the threshold, as the boy ran out into the hall.

There stood Miss Dorry, with the rose in her hand. A great velvety rose, sure enough, exquisitely pink and fragrant, with its cool, green leaves all about it, and with drops on its soft petals which might easily pass for dewdrops to one so little versed in such matters as Brown Pink. He was so entranced and absorbed with the royal flower, which certainly could not claim even remote cousinship with Maria's abnormal bloom, and Miss Dorry was so engrossed with him and his pleasure, that neither of them noticed the lodger in his doorway, nor heard him when he presently shut the door softly to again, and went back to his solitary pipe, settling down in his big chair with a deep sigh this time, instead of the customary grunt.

It was not until the rose had been exhaustively studied and admired, and the bell had rung for dinner, and Brown Pink was coming out of Miss Dorry's room again, to go downstairs with her, that he remembered his new acquaintance. Then a pang of remorse shot through his loving little heart at the thought of his own forgetfulness.

"Oh, Miss Dorry, the old gentleman! I asked him to come and see my rose, and then I never once thought of him again. Can't I show it to him now?"

"Better wait till after dinner," said Miss Dorry. "Maria won't like it if we are not prompt, you know."

So they went downstairs, Brown Pink chattering so fast that, by the time they reached the table, Miss Dorry had heard all about his unexpected call upon the lonely lodger, and began to feel almost as if she knew the old gentleman herself.

Dinner over, Brown Pink's first thought was to repair any damage which his character might have sustained in the mind of his new friend. Miss Dorry had placed the rose in a tall, old-fashioned glass, clear and slender, which suited well its lonely grace; and with this in one hand, the little boy knocked softly with the other upon the front room door.

No answer.

He knocked again, a little louder than before. Did some one say, "Come in"? He was not sure, but it seemed highly probable; so, slowly pushing the door before him, Brown Pink entered.

Not a soul was there. The big chair stood empty,

STOOD STOCK-STILL FOR A MOMENT

save for the brown dressing-gown thrown across its arm. The long pipe, empty too, lay on the table, and a pair of empty slippers graced the hearth-rug. The old gentleman had evidently gone to his own dinner. With a very unpleasant feeling of having intruded himself where he had no business to be, Brown Pink stood stock-still for a moment. Then he turned to go, but something in the aspect of those forsaken slippers, and that lonely gown, seemed to hold him as by a clinging tendril of pity. For a brief instant the child looked and wavered; then, boldly advancing to the table, he set the glass, with its glowing, fragrant rose, close beside the idle pipe, and ran back to Miss Dorry's room as fast as his legs would take him.

CHAPTER IV

SPELLBOUND

Nannie's friends were legion. Whenever you hear it said of a child that she leads a very solitary life, with no playmates of her own age, be sure that child is rich beyond your reckoning. It is impossible for children to be friendless. They may be homeless, suffering, deprived, but they are children still; the kingdom of heaven is within them; and he who is able "of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" has transmitted to his little ones a share of his own power. If all else be lacking, a genuine child will make friends of the very bricks in a city sidewalk.

Nannie was in no such evil case as this. Her grandparents, her sister, and Miss Betty Vivian were friends far above the average; but in addition to these she had others; friends of whom the world knew nothing, but who were all the world to her. In the first place, there was the old coachman, Peter Maguire, a stubborn, ill-favored, commonplace Irish-

man to all appearance, yet who became in Nannie's gifted hands a most interesting personage. He was the veritable coachman whom Cinderella's godmother had evoked from the rat-trap; and it must be conceded that, even in human shape, he retained to a remarkable degree his rat-like features and propensities. When on duty, he always wore a long gray coat, and when Nannie spoke to him, he would show his long yellow teeth. He was very fond of Nannie. He was also very fond of cheese, and it was Nannie's delight to present him with a generous scoopful of her grandfather's old Stilton, and watch him nibble it down. Peter abhorred cats. He could give no adequate reason for this prejudice, beyond the assertion that they were "shly, cra'pin', desateful varmints;" but Nannie knew the reason, and laughed to herself when her pet cat, Minagrobis, namesake of the White Cat's famous admiral, came sniffing and clawing about the old coachman, who most assuredly never suspected the true cause for such unwelcome attentions, but laid them to the score of the cheese crumbs in his pocket.

Then there were the horses, the cows, the colt, the calf, and the two dogs, all of which, to Nannie's fancy, were held in their dumb, four-footed state by potent spells which should one day be broken. Next

in order came the vegetable kingdom. There were four old apple-trees in the garden, so old that their trunks were hollow, and within dwelt as many peculiar personages, whose acquaintance Nannie had first made in books. One of them was the field-mouse who was kind to Thumbelina, in Hans Andersen's charming story. Another was the old woman whom Gerda visited when she was seeking for little Kay. Still a third was the witch from whose roof Hansel and Gretel pulled the pancakes, and on whose tree the bark hung in particularly loose and tempting scales. Beneath the fourth lived an old toad, who was "everything by turns and nothing long." Every bush and tree, every shrub and flower, held its own attraction, furnished its own companionship, for this child whom outside people called lonely. On rainy days, or those rare occasions when she was indisposed, there were the chess-men. The white king and queen held their court in the bay window; the red rulers dwelt beside the fire. "Alice in Wonderland" had never been heard of in those days, yet many were the events and vicissitudes in the lives of these royal rivals. The most richly bound books were used for dais purposes in the royal throne-rooms, and a tortoise-shell jewel-casket, on gilt feet, was the chariot which served either ménage impar-

tially. The Princess held that nothing was too good for Nannie's use, since she never abused anything; and the little girl's pleasant fantasies were never balked in their unfolding by ignorant interdict. These are delights which cannot be shared by mortals. No two people ever invest the same thing with the same attributes, which is one and the chief reason why lonely children often resent playmates. They are not selfish, necessarily; they are simply torn and tormented in their most sacred feelings by outsiders who know nothing of the associations which cling about disheveled dolls and battered tin horses. Only one who has eyes to see, and has watched the glories of imagination gather about some simple toy, can understand the latent possibilities of a single marble or domino, or feel for the child who suddenly sees whole life-histories broken up and destroyed by alien, unsympathetic fingers. The Princess never suggested to Nannie that she should part with her pets and playthings in favor of some other child who lacked. She knew that even the mother of twelve children has not one to spare. Instead, she made the very tenacity with which her little sister clung to these animate and inanimate friends the means of drawing forth her sympathy for others. There was not much effort needed to effect this. Nannie had

a royal nature. Many were the pleasures which she relinquished, the gifts which she relegated, voluntarily, to those whose lives were not so sunshiny as hers; yet, even in her kindnesses, she gave the preference to older people over those of her own age. When the Princess asked her why, she replied gravely, "I understand them better."

There was an old deaf and dumb man who lived all by himself, and whom few people noticed, save to nod silently when they met him in the street. Nannie made him her special charge. She said he was spellbound; and although she realized that the spell was beyond any mortal power to break, so effectually did she labor to neutralize it that the old man's life became a different thing to him.

"Whither away, Nan?" asked the Princess, one afternoon in November, seeing Nannie preparing for a plunge into the keen, crisp air.

"To Cap'n Joe's," replied Nannie, enunciating with some difficulty over the fat lead pencil which, both hands being busy with the button-hook, she held tightly clinched between her teeth. She always conversed with Cap'n Joe in writing; and, lest she should forget the important implement of communication, she had a way of putting it into her mouth the very first thing when a visit to the Pound was

in prospect. Cap'n Joe was Pound-keeper. His small, weather-beaten cottage stood close beside the square, stone inclosure which had been erected more than a hundred years ago for the benefit of stray cattle. The Pound was a very attractive place, with great shady elms drooping over it, and the greenest of green turf within; for few and far between nowadays were the creatures who incurred its penalties, and Cap'n Joe's office was a sinecure. There had been talk of discontinuing it, as a needless expense to the town; but Squire Gladwin had so forcibly represented to the town fathers, in congress assembled, that to substitute Cap'n Joe himself would not only be equally expensive, but also a needless and unwarrantable humiliation of the poor old man; and had so emphatically declared that if the town was too poor to maintain an old and faithful servant in his helplessness, he, the Squire, would lend them the money to do it with; that, by a unanimous vote, it was decided to continue the payment to Josiah Crane of the sum of fifty dollars yearly, for the keeping of the town Pound, so long as the said Crane should live. So Cap'n Joe kept the Pound, and the Pound kept him; but only Nannie Vivian ever dreamed of visiting either the one or the other of these two bygone relics.

The Pound lay off the main road; for the main road had straightened itself some twenty-five years before, and in so doing left this old loop to gather to itself grass and moss and tangled hedge-rows, which gradually narrowed it down and closed it in until it became one of the wildest, prettiest places imaginable. Hilton folk were mostly farmers or tradesmen, with neither time nor inclination for by-ways; so there was none to interfere with Nannie in her self-assumed sovereignty, and the "old road" became a favorite province of her somewhat scattered domain.

The trees were bare now, and Nannie could see all the cunningly hidden nests, for which, in summer, she had vainly sought. Only the hemlocks and the firs were as green as ever, and seemed to enjoy the approach of winter as much as Nannie herself. It had been freezing all day, and in the ruts and along the edges of the brook were exquisite bits of ice work, thin and frosty, with fern and leaf patterns all over them. When Nannie found a place where Jack had hurried his work, and turned out a plainer pattern, she would touch the tip of her small boot to the sheer, brittle fabric, and hear it shiver to atoms with a musical "clink," like the breaking of a crystal bubble.

There was smoke wreathing from the chimney of the little old house to-day. Cap'n Joe evidently had a rousing fire. Wood was plentiful in those days, and Squire Gladwin, fond of a good blaze himself, made it his special business to keep the hearths of his poorer neighbors well supplied from his big wood lots. The little room was warm and ruddy with the genial glow when Nannie ran in, herself genial and glowing to match, from her happy heart and brisk walk.

Cap'n Joe sat in his big wooden arm-chair, reading a week-old paper. The old man had one great blessing: his eyes were as keen and strong as those of a hawk; and when he could get anything to read he read with avidity. He had not always been deaf and dumb. Until he was twelve years old he could hear and speak as well as anybody; and, happily for him, he had laid in certain acquirements of mind and fingers during those twelve years which proved untold blessings to him when the sickness came which left him incapable of hard work or social enjoyments. In the earlier days of their friendship Nannie had once written, in the little blank book which the old man always kept handy as his contribution to conversation, a question which had cost her much previous thought and final trepidation.

Still, she felt that it would be well for the world and Cap'n Joe to have it answered. So she wrote, in fear and trembling, —

"Captain Joe, what made you deaf and dumb?"

She might have spared her fears; for Cap'n Joe, clasping the pencil very tightly in his horny fingers, had indited in response, with hard breathings and the greatest alacrity, the following succinct statement: —

"Got drownded in ise-watter."

The old man looked up cheerfully as Nannie rounded the table and came within his field of vision. Even his newspaper paled in importance before this welcome visitor. He drew another chair to the fire, and threw on a fresh log; and then stood by, beaming, while Nannie took off her hat and coat and warmed her cold hands at the blaze. Presently he thrust his hand deep down into a capacious side pocket and drew forth a very small, very dilapidated book. It was a dictionary. Cap'n Joe was a man of resources, and had reduced silent conversation to a science. The deaf and dumb alphabet was not a common accomplishment then, as it is now, and he had such infrequent occasion to use it that he was no adept himself; but every one who understood anything understood the dictionary. He

found his place quickly, and poked the little book under Nannie's nose, with his broad thumb-nail indicating the word "cold." Nannie nodded energetically, and then they both shivered in token of perfect understanding. Cap'n Joe then shifted his position and brought up on the word "snow-storm," which elicited another nod from his visitor. By this time they were fairly launched upon the broad sea of conversation, and the pilot was allowed to get back into his boat, or, to speak more correctly, into Cap'n Joe's pocket, while Nannie took the helm. With the fat pencil, upon the top line of a fresh page in the old man's blank book, she wrote in clear, round letters, —

"Day after to-morrow will be Thanksgiving."

Cap'n Joe read, smiled, nodded, and handed it back again.

"Grandmother has been making pies," wrote Nannie, in pursuance of her subject. She never alluded to her fairy fancies with Cap'n Joe; he would not have understood.

The Pound-keeper nodded again and smacked his lips softly to show how fully he appreciated the value of this item.

"Mince, apple, squash, cranberry, custard, and a great plum-pudding," ran on the nimble pencil.

Cap'n Joe's hands went up in the air.

"Grandfather has had two turkeys killed, and a goose, and four ducks, — poor things!"

Again the eloquent hands went up.

"All sorts of vegetables, and nuts, and raisins, and fruit, you know."

Cap'n Joe nodded. He knew.

"And each of us is to ask a friend to dinner."

The nod came slowly and gravely this time. It seemed a great and far-away bliss to Cap'n Joe, this having friends and asking them to dinner. He could remember such things in the dim past.

"Grandfather and Grandmother are going to ask Uncle Henry and Aunt Martha."

Nod.

"And May is going to ask Cousin Betty Vivian."

Nod.

"And I am going to ask you."

Had the sky fallen?

Cap'n Joe sat, with open mouth, staring at the astounding sentence. There it was, set down in letters as bold and plain as Nannie's pencil could indite; and, if that was not enough, Nannie's head was nodding like a mandarin's in emphatic support of her statement. To be asked to Squire Gladwin's Thanksgiving dinner! Not only to have friends,

but to be a friend himself, whom somebody cared to ask! There is no knowing how long the old man might have sat rigid beneath the influence of this new spell which had been cast upon him, had not Nannie waxed impatient. She seized the book again and wrote hastily, —

"Can't you come?"

Cap'n Joe came to with a gasp. His mouth closed slowly, and a flush crept over his wrinkled face to the very roots of his white hair. Cap'n Joe had really beautiful hair. He took the writing equipment which Nannie was holding out, and with the book placed squarely before him, — himself bolt upright, placed squarely before the table, — and two fingers laid along the pencil in orthodox copy-book style, while the other two stiffly supported their mates, as threescore years ago he had been taught was proper, — he penned, in somewhat shaky characters, the following characteristic reply: —

Miss Nany;

Your very grattifying inviteation is acepted with deep plesure by

Your most obt. servt.

Josiah Crane.

Let it not be supposed that because Cap'n Joe

had not at all points thoroughly mastered his pocket-dictionary, he was, therefore, either rough or illiterate. A man more truly courteous by nature, or better read along those lines which he especially elected, was not to be found in Hilton. Nannie would not have been allowed to visit, far less invite to his table, any save one whom Grandfather Gladwin felt to possess the essential qualities of a gentleman. Were we all compelled to write out the fine sentiments which we utter so glibly, some of us might make a worse botch of it than did honest old Cap'n Joe.

When Nannie had run home again, through the yellow light of a threatening wintry sunset, the old man closed his door for the night and sat down alone beside the fire. He drew the book toward him which held so many pleasant records of his little friend's visits, and slowly read through again the sentences just written. When he came to the one which stood out conspicuously to his gratified feeling, he sat gazing upon it almost as amazedly as he had done before; and when at length he laid the book aside, and removed his iron-bowed spectacles, it was only to take his red bandanna and wipe away two great, childlike tears which were making their way, by irregularly grooved channels, down his withered face.

The snow-storm came, as Cap'n Joe had predicted. It was a genuine old-fashioned Thanksgiving, white below and blue above. The air was full of cheer and sunshine, and the merry sound of bells. Nannie's predictions were fulfilled also to the letter. It was a feast for body and soul that the Good Old King and Queen set before their friends and subjects.

"King," said Nannie to the Squire, as she came and stood beside him at the fire, when all the guests were gone, "I have enjoyed having Cap'n Joe here very much, and I think he enjoyed it too."

"I know he did," replied the Squire heartily, "and so did I. We must have the old man again. He never had much education; it 's a hard thing to get, without ears, or voice, or money; but if you come right down to first principles, there is n't a man in Hilton with better blood in his veins than old Joe Crane. I can remember when his grandfather was as well-to-do as any one in Welford County, with a helping hand for anybody who needed it. And now his grandson, when he is old and helpless, is without a friend in the world."

"Not quite," said Nannie softly. "You are his friend, and so am I. I love old people."

"That 's right, midget," said the Squire, pulling the little girl down upon his knee. "Keep on loving

'em, and may be one of these days some of 'em will love you. There 's one or two of 'em that are n't far from it now. I guess neither Cap'n Joe nor Squire Gladwin will ever be very badly off as long as they manage to keep on the right side of you and the fairies."

One of the Princess's wise ways with Nannie was to make the day following any absorbing event a particularly interesting one. It is too much to expect of people that immediately upon a grand climax they shall settle down quietly to every-day routine. In the Emerald Palace, the day after Thanksgiving was always devoted to Christmas plans and lists, and the setting in train of divers mysterious bits of work. This year, the decisions of the secret session proved most interesting. The sisters were to have their photograph taken for the Good Old King and Queen, and it was to be colored and framed. Nannie had never had her photograph taken; the only likenesses of her in existence were two tantalizing daguerreotypes, which would never catch the light just right, turn and twist them as she might. Then Cap'n Joe was to have a warm knit scarf and mittens; Cousin Betty a dainty lace cap; Peter Rat, as Nannie called the old coachman, a pair of fur driving-gloves; and Nurse Craik a black silk apron.

Now all this necessitated a visit to the city; so it was decided that the Princess, and Nannie, and Nurse Craik should take the train for Bayport on Monday morning, make a week's stay at the Hamilton House, and do up all their important business. There was nothing so very novel in the plan as far as the Princess was concerned. She frequently had affairs which required her presence in Bayport; and she and Uncle Henry, who was an old bachelor, and had made his headquarters there for years, were as well known at the Hamilton House as the head waiter himself, or as Mr. Dakin, the proprietor, who was an old acquaintance of Nannie's father, and always cared for Miss Vivian as if she were not only a princess, but a royal one at that. But Nannie had only been to the city once since she left it, eight years before, a mere baby, whose memory was just developing, and therefore incapable of holding on to anything very long or very fast. It was a great event for her. She packed her little hand-bag at least ten times between Friday night and Monday morning; wrote and rewrote her brief shopping-list; and was so sure the Queen and Cousin Betty must have forgotten a great many things they needed that the two old ladies began to feel as if they really had, and were fain to rack their brains for all sorts

of small commissions. As for the Old King, Nannie could get but one answer out of him : —

"If you can find another little girl that you think would suit me and the fairies, bring her along."

When Nannie stepped on board the train Monday morning, after the long carriage drive to Redham, she felt as if she were stepping into a chariot drawn by a fiery dragon which was to bear her away to some enchanted country. She confided her sensations to Uncle Henry, who had stayed over Sunday at Hilton on purpose to come down with his pet nieces.

"So you are," he replied, with a twinkle in his eyes, "only it is what they call a car, not a chariot. The dragon Vapor has got hold of you, and he is carrying you off to the country of Pandemonium. King Midas rules there, and he is a queer fellow. People who have a certain talisman in their pockets find things very much to their taste ; but those who have lost it, or never had it, fare badly. However, you are likely to do very well, being under the fairies' protection. Old Midas is afraid of fairies. But if you catch him trying to play any tricks on you, just show him this." And Uncle Henry tucked a ten-dollar gold piece into Nannie's little gray muff, and unfolded his newspaper with a chuckle.

Nannie smiled and shook her head. She under-

stood Uncle Henry's nonsense well enough, but to her it was not nonsense, after all. She studied the shining talisman a moment, and then dropped it into her purse very thoughtfully. Talismans were good things to have in the country of Pandemonium. She would not use it for herself; King Midas would find it hard to play any tricks on her while she had the Beautiful Princess with her; but perhaps there would be some one who had lost the talisman, or even one of those unfortunate people who had never found it, and then she could use hers for them. It was a very happy little face which looked out from the window of the softly cushioned carriage which Mr. Dakin had sent to meet them at the depot. Even the sight of the cold, ragged, dirty children in Auster Street did not sober it very much; for there was the talisman, safe in the little red silk purse, and wise as Nannie was with fairy wisdom, she had not yet learned how limited a power a ten-dollar gold piece wields.

Although their rooms at the hotel were not very much like the Emerald Palace, they were, nevertheless, very pleasant rooms indeed. The furnishings in the parlor were all of a warm crimson color, which made things look very bright and cosy; and there was an open coal fire which fulfilled the pro-

mise of the curtains and carpet and chair coverings, and made Nannie feel at home directly; although, in her secret heart, she felt that no coal in an iron grate could ever compare with the big, sizzling logs that sent their broad, red flames flying up the wide, black chimney-throat.

Dinner was the first thing, and a wonderfully pleasant thing, too. For not only was Nannie very hungry indeed after her journey, but when she had confided to the Princess what she would like to have, making her choice with something of the confident freedom which she might have felt in the White Cat's palace, she went off with Nurse Craik to be made fresh and tidy, and, coming back half an hour later, found that a little table had sprung up, in the most magical way, directly before the fire, and that on it were already most of the dishes she had specified; while a very black personage, with very white teeth, stood ready to push her chair up to the table and hand her whatever she wanted. Nannie had never seen a colored man before, but one learns many things from fairy tales, and Nannie had learned to be very polite to all sorts of people and animals, and to take the most extraordinary things as mere matters of course. So she was never betrayed into making awkward blunders, and always

behaved with as much ease and propriety as the royal and distinguished people with whom she so constantly associated.

The Princess was waiting for her, looking more lovely than ever in a gray satin gown, with a bunch of violets at her throat; and so completely was the blackamoor in her power that she had only to wave her little white hand, and in a twinkling he was beside her, ready to bring whatever she desired.

Uncle Henry had gone off to see an old friend, and would not be back till late; so, when the magical table and the blackamoor had both disappeared, the sisters drew their chairs close together beside the fire, and, since there was no spinet at hand, the Princess told Nannie a long and wonderful story, which led them through all sorts of beautiful places, and among many delightful people, winding up at last in a charming old garden on the Thames, where Nannie found herself so perfectly happy, and so very sleepy, that she fairly lost herself among the mingled delights of Chelsea and Dreamland, and knew only that there was a very sweet sound in her ears, — doubtless a nightingale; that the sun felt warmer than she had supposed it would in England, even in Queen Elizabeth's time; and that over and through everything there floated the delicious fragrance of real English violets.

CHAPTER V

TALISMANS

The next day the photograph was taken. The photographer was a stately looking old man, who wore a black velvet jacket and skull-cap, and talked broken English. Nannie set him down in her own mind at once as a powerful magician from the Black Forest, who possessed a wonderful mirror, by the aid of which he could so fix the reflections of those who looked upon it as to enable them to keep the picture forevermore. When, after several attempts, he finally emerged from his dark closet with a dripping sheet of glass in his hands, and, holding it up to the light, showed her the queer-looking figures supposed to represent herself and the Princess, — in which everything that should have been dark was light, and all that should have been light was dark, — and assured her that he had been "most soocksazefool," and that they would have a "peekshure altogedder sharmeeng," she was more than ever convinced that, however the affair might turn out, there was black art at the bottom of it.

The Princess consulted the magician about having the picture colored when it was done; and he became interested at once, and promised to send a young lady to the hotel to take their order, and note the proper shades for eyes and hair and clothing.

"Mees Evans ees a ver lofely yoong vooman," he assured the Princess; "und a yoong vooman of mooch tahlent. She vorks for me here, in mine studio; but dees is not her day. I vill send her to you to-morrow."

Accordingly, the next morning, after breakfast, as they were beginning to plan their day's work and pleasure, the black waiter announced "Miss Evans," and in walked Brown Pink's Miss Dorry. The Princess, like every one else, was charmed. There was no resisting the fresh, sweet English face, and the clear, low voice, with its little, nameless accent, so winning and unusual. Miss Dorry, on her part, was evidently very fain for the work. She had brought the proofs with her, and they discussed them together. The picture was indeed, in every sense, a picture; and the living subjects appealed strongly to Miss Dorry's beauty-loving eyes. She wanted to make something more of this than a mere colored photograph; and it was finally arranged that she should come for an hour or two each afternoon, and

do the work directly from her models. It transpired, in the course of conversation, that she used water-colors in other ways also; and the Princess begged her to bring some of her sketches with her when she came again.

"Is n't she lovely!" exclaimed Nannie, when the door had closed behind their caller and they were alone again. "Her skin is like rose-leaves, and her eyes are like stars! Did you *ever* see any one so pretty?"

The Princess looked into the eager, expressive little face that was flashing its own bright eyes upon her, and smiled.

"She is charming," she said, — "charming. A real English rose. I am so glad Herr Bildenmacher sent her to us. Our picture will be a triumph of art. Get your wraps on quickly now, Nan, for we must accomplish a great deal before lunch."

Promptly at three o'clock Miss Dorry returned. She drew a little table near the window, where the light was strongest, and laid out her pretty implements with quick, accustomed hands. There was no time to be lost; the afternoons were short.

"We can see the sketches later," she said, laying a leather portfolio on the larger table; "but now we must make the most of every moment. It is so

fortunate that Herr Bildenmacher was able to print this forenoon. I would not let him touch it up at all; that can be done best in the coloring." She drew the photograph from its enfolding papers and held it up. Nannie clasped her hands in satisfaction.

"The magician was right," she said. "'Eet ees von grrahnd soocksaze.' It is just like you, my Beautiful, and I guess it is like me, too. It ought to be called 'The Princess and the Witch.'"

Miss Dorry, busy over her colors, flashed a quick glance of pleased recognition at the speaker, and laughed that low, merry laugh that we have heard before.

"The name is very apt," she said; "and I have always thought Herr Bildenmacher like some wise old conjurer."

The Princess smiled. "Nannie lives in Fairyland, Miss Evans. There are no ordinary mortals among her acquaintance. Just what she will call you, I am not sure, but it will not be what others call you."

Miss Dorry laughed again. "That is like Brown Pink," she said.

Of course Nannie wanted to know about Brown Pink immediately; and as no one could better have described him than Miss Dorry, the little fellow was

presently set before them in all the pleasantness and pathos of his secluded life. When Miss Dorry told them about the rose, Nannie looked very sober, and the tears sprang to the Princess's eyes.

"What did the old gentleman say when he found the rose on his table?" asked Nannie, at length.

"I fancy he is a person who thinks more than he says," replied Miss Dorry; "but he has a fine, large-hearted look, and I hope Brown Pink has made a good friend."

"Is he very old?" asked Nannie; "I love very old men."

The low laugh bubbled up again. "That is only Brown Pink's idea," said Miss Dorry; "he fancies gray hairs and age inseparable. In reality, Mr. Penfold cannot be more than forty, if so much."

"Mr. P—," began Nannie, in a tone of great surprise; but catching a quick look from the Princess, she stopped short with her lips still puckered up in a great "P," and, staring hard at her sister, asked the rest of her question with her eyes.

"Penfold is a Welsh name," remarked the Princess quietly.

"Yes," assented Miss Dorry, "and so is Evans. I am Welsh, or my father was. I was born in New Brunswick."

By this time the light was fading, and the picture had made considerable progress. Miss Dorry ceased painting, and began to pack away her things.

"I will leave the portfolio, if you like," she said, "and you can look it over at your leisure. There is nothing really finished about my sketches; I never had time for that. They are just rapidly caught bits that I hoped to work out more fully some day."

Nannie, who had been taking counsel with her sister while Miss Dorry cleaned her palette, ran away into the next room, and presently came back with the daintiest little white parcel, tied with pink ribbon, in her hand.

"Please tell Brown Pink," she said breathlessly, "that you met a beautiful princess and a witch, and that they sent him this. It is fairy food."

All of which Miss Dorry repeated verbatim when she reached home; and Brown Pink accepted the statement with deep wonder and gratitude, but not a shadow of doubt. Nor did he feel any cause for skepticism when, on opening the mysterious packet, he found therein a gay little box all covered with flowers and butterflies, and full of the most delicious French bonbons, that melted in his unwonted mouth. Brown Pink had never seen a chocolate

cream before. When the first sweet morsel had slipped tenderly down his throat, he stood, for some seconds, gazing at Miss Dorry with almost an awe-struck look in his blue eyes. Then he drew a long breath of deep delight.

"I wish we were all fairies!" he said softly.

The doorbell rang as they were going downstairs, and when they reached the landing, Maria passed them, going up. She wore her grumpiest look, and held something white in her hand.

"Pretty time o' night ter be comin' wiv notes," she muttered crossly, "jus' as decent folks is a-settin' down ter deir suppers! Mas' Penfol' he gittin' mighty gay, he is. Nebber see no sich trash afore sence he come ter dis yer house." And, having by this time reached the front room door, she stalked straight in, with no such courteous scruples as Brown Pink had felt, and dumped the offending missive upon the table to await its owner's return. It was a lady's note, daintily enveloped and sealed, and addressed in a clear, characteristic hand to

MR. WILLIAM LLEWELLYN PENFOLD.

Somehow, between the note and the rose, the room had suddenly lost its lonely look.

Nannie looked very wise and merry when Miss

Dorry told her of the reception of her gift. Pleasant as it was to have fairy friends, it began to seem still pleasanter to be a fairy herself.

"That box is a true talisman," said Miss Dorry; "it has made every one happy, even old cross Maria. When Brown Pink popped a candied date into her mouth last evening, she grinned from ear to ear."

"All sorts of things are talismans," replied Nannie, in high glee. "I have seen three or four already, since we came to Pandemonium, and one of them is working splendidly. Beautiful's talismans always work." And she rubbed her curly head lovingly against the Princess's shoulder, as she stood beside that royal little lady.

Miss Dorry glanced from her work to her subject, and down again at her work. It was almost done; the next sitting would see it completed. She was very proud of it, as well she might be. The likeness was striking, the artistic quality rare. From a vague, cloudy background shone out two charmingly contrasted faces: the Princess's high-bred, gracious loveliness enhanced and emphasized by the bright, arch beauty of her little sister, as the calm crescent moon is asterisked by a gleaming planet.

The picture stood on the temporary easel which Miss Dorry had skillfully contrived from a tilting

table-top and a yard measure, when, later in the evening, black Plato ushered a gentleman into the parlor. He was a striking-looking person, with prematurely gray hair and a keen, clever face; and every one seemed very glad to see him. He strode across the room when the first greetings were over, and stood for some moments before the all but finished portrait. It seemed to possess an interest for him apart from the faces themselves.

"Aha," he said, smiling, and half to himself, as it were; "so these are the princess and the witch!"

CHAPTER VI

MAKING FRIENDS

"Now, then, in the first place, what's your name?"

Brown Pink, from the depths of a big armchair at one side of the first-floor-front grate, shot a glance of grave inquiry at his vis-à-vis, the Old Gentleman, who was seated in a similar armchair at the other side; only the Old Gentleman filled his chair pretty compactly, while Brown Pink's container had swallowed him at one gulp and was ready for more.

"Your real name, I mean," explained the Old Gentleman, whom we may as well call Mr. Penfold and done with it; "not Miss Dorry's name for you."

"Oh," said Brown Pink, "my real name is William Anderton Otis."

Mr. Penfold's face was a fine one, even when it wore a somewhat stern look, which it did much of the time; but when it lighted up, it was a very winning face indeed; and it lighted up now, though he only said, —

"William is my name, too."

"Is it?" said Brown Pink; "I am very glad." And his little face shone.

"So am I," said Mr. Penfold, "and one of these days perhaps I shall tell you why." But he added no more then, only leaned back in his chair and puffed away at his pipe with a very sweet and quiet look in his deep-set eyes. Brown Pink said no more, either. He was a wise little soul, for his years, and something told him that when people looked like that, they had pleasanter thoughts than any he could offer; so he just leaned back in his chair, too, and gazed into the glowing coals with eyes which gradually grew as dreamy as those he had been looking at.

Mr. Penfold came back first to present company, and he came back in the wake of a deep sigh. But when he caught sight of Brown Pink's face, the sigh gave place to a smile, which, somehow, seemed not unrelated to the former one.

"Well, what is it?" he inquired amusedly, rising at the same time to refill his pipe from the queer brown jar on the mantel.

"Yes, sir! What, sir?" said Brown Pink, coming out of *his* dream with a jump.

"What were you thinking about so hard?"

"Oh, I was thinking," said Brown Pink slowly, "about the fire; and then that made me think of the story Miss Dorry told me last night. It was about a big brown bear," he went on, answering the question in Mr. Penfold's face, "who used to come every evening to a small hut near the forest, where dwelt a poor widow and her two children" (Brown Pink was nothing if not exact), "and lie down before the warm fire to dry his rough coat. He turned into a prince afterward," added the narrator casually, "but I did n't care particularly about him then. I like bears very much, and I think fires are just beautiful!" And the blue eyes, after one look into the gray ones for sympathy, went back to the red coals in the fat grate.

"H'm!" said Mr. Penfold through closed teeth; for he was just applying a match to his pipe, and the brown shreds therein were crawling and glowing and humping up in a manner peculiar to themselves; "how many bears have you ever been acquainted with?"

Brown Pink, with his accustomed precision, thought a moment and answered, —

"Six, sir."

"Where did you meet them?"

"Miss Dorry told me about two, and there were

the three bears whose house Silverhair went to, you know, and then there is a bear in the picture of Oliver. But perhaps you don't know Oliver."

"I don't believe I do; where does he live?"

"In the country," said Brown Pink simply. "There 's a picture about him in Aunt Debby's Bible; and there 's a bear, and a lion, and a lamb, and a calf, and a ser-pent, and lots of grass and trees. They are all interesting, but I like the bear best; he has such a pleasant smile."

Mr. Penfold's smile was dangerously near broadening into a laugh, but he bit his amber mouthpiece hard, and contrived to keep within polite bounds.

"Well, I don't know any bears of that sort," he said presently, "but I like fires as well as you do, — fires, and roses." Here he glanced over his shoulder at the study-table, where Brown Pink's rose yet stood in its slender vase, blushing and beautiful, though it had been there now for several days, and then he added, as if more to himself than to the boy, "and *some* people."

Mr. Penfold was away the next day, and the next day, and the next. This was unusual. He sometimes had been gone over a Sunday, but never longer. This time he stayed until Wednesday, returning when Brown Pink was at dinner; so that

it was not until evening that the latter discovered the fact of his friend's arrival. The Old Gentleman was coming down to go out to his tea, and Brown Pink was going up to call Miss Dorry to hers. They met at the stair-foot, with apparent pleasure to both parties.

"I suppose," said Mr. Penfold, when they had shaken hands as gravely as if both were deacons, "that your aunt is usually at home in the evening, is she not?"

"Always," replied Brown Pink concisely. "She never goes out, because she can't, you know."

"A most excellent reason. Well, William, will you kindly say to her that, with her permission, I will give myself the pleasure of calling upon her a little later?"

Brown Pink merely answered, "Yes, sir;" but his eyes opened wide with surprise, and there was a flash in them which said there would be pleasure in the call for some one else, too, as he went stumping very fast up the steep, narrow stairway to give Miss Dorry more information than he had originally started with.

They were all gathered about the table when Mr. Penfold knocked at the sitting-room door an hour later. Maria had replaced the white cloth with the

green one, and the big lamp stood in the middle. Aunt Debby was knitting, as usual; Miss Dorry was reading; and Brown Pink had opened the big Bible at the place where Abraham, swathed in a robe of wondrous green, was welcoming to his patriarchal tent two very red and blue angels.

"You see," Brown Pink explained to Miss Dorry, "Aunt Debby is *something* like Abrum; and if Mr. Penfold is n't exactly two angels, he 's big enough for two." Which confidence, immediately illustrated as it was by the entrance of the double angel and Aunt Debby's somewhat stiff and flustered greeting, taxed Miss Dorry's self-possession severely.

But if Mr. Penfold was twofold in respect of bulk, in respect of tact and courtesy he was beyond computation. After fifteen minutes of his easy, genial companionship, Miss Dorry felt as if she had known him for years; and even prim Aunt Debby visibly thawed and mellowed in the sunshine of her lodger's substantial presence. Indeed, so pleasantly entertained did the worthy lady find herself by his anecdotes and recollections of a time when she, too, had been young, and if not gay, at least as gay as she knew how to be, that she quite ignored the occasional remarks of the tall clock, forgot to send Brown Pink to bed, and was only brought to a real-

izing sense of the flight of time by her guest himself, who rose in a hurry as the clock struck nine, and apologized for having been betrayed by the pleasure of his call into prolonging it so unpardonably; begging, as a token of forgiveness for the present offense, permission to repeat it in the near future, — a permission most graciously granted. So many long-ago associations had been revived in Aunt Debby's mind during this red-letter evening that, even after Brown Pink had gone sleepily and Maria mutteringly to their respective beds, she still sat dreamily on, in her armchair, with her knitting-work lying unheeded in her lap.

"Yes," she said at length, in reply to a word or two from Miss Dorry, "he is a thorough gentleman, and well he may be, for he comes of the best of blood on both sides. His mother was Celia Farley, and her younger sister, Mary, was a great friend of my oldest sister Charlotte. I knew the Farleys well; they were a very superior family." Higher praise than this was not in Aunt Debby's power to bestow.

Meantime the princess and the witch had gone back to the Emerald Palace, and lessons, work, and play went on, hand in hand, while the very air was full of happy mystery, and all sorts of unseen influ-

ences and circumstances were weaving charms and spells innumerable to furnish forth the fairy tale of life. Now, in this fairy tale as in every other, it is to them who hold the talismans that fortune falls; but there are all sorts of talismans, as Nannie said. She herself had several, and so had the Princess; Miss Dorry had her own; Mr. Penfold was fast discovering his; but the fairest and most potent of all had been given, by divine compensation, into the unconscious hands of little Brown Pink.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOREST PATH

WHEREVER you come upon an enchanted prince, you may be sure that somewhere, not very far away, there is also an enchanted castle.

Nannie was very busy in these days, yet never so busy as to forget her little gray Prince in the old oak-tree. Two or three times a week, unless the weather was very stormy, she sought the brown basket in Miss Betty's hall cupboard, filled her pockets with butternuts, and ran down through lane and pasture to the brook-side. One Saturday afternoon, when great snow-banks lay dark along the horizon, rolling heavily upward, like ocean fogs, until even the sun turned sulky, she filled her pockets as usual, and taking an extra supply in her hands, lest the storm should prove long and the drifts deep, made her way, with less loitering than was her wont, to the big oaks. Strange to say, no strident little bark rang out in welcome; no lithe, fluffy form came leaping over the ground to meet her; the place was

silent, — deserted. Nannie called and called, but only a chickadee, eating his way roundabout a cedar bush, found voice, between mouthfuls, to reply. Where was Quirlicue?

The path, after crossing the brook and rounding the oak clump, struck off in a bee-line through the woods. Nannie had never explored these woods, but doubtless Quirlicue knew them well. He might be taking an airing in the tree-tops, or visiting friends at a distance. Nannie emptied her hands upon the nearest rock, lest the Prince should return hungry, and set off along the untried pathway to seek her wandering friend. For a time she called as she went, but gradually the wild beauty and novelty of her surroundings absorbed her completely; she forgot her immediate errand, and saw only the great gray rocks and tree-trunks, the shadowy green of the hemlocks, the glistening silver of the birches, and the exquisite, delicate beauty of the mosses and lichens all about her. She came to herself at length, with a start of dismay. It was beginning to grow dusk; how far she had come! and where could Quirlicue be? The trees drew suddenly farther apart, — the snow between them lay level and white; just ahead, the pathway branched to right and left. She sprang

forward, casting a last look in either direction for the errant squirrel. He was nowhere to be seen, but just before her rose the gray walls and pointed gables of a great stone castle, or so it seemed to Nannie. The forest trees ranged themselves all about it on this side, but beyond she could see extensive and finely laid-out grounds, with a long graveled driveway winding up to a massive, over-arched portal; and here and there the roofs of other buildings, all of glass. Nannie was not quite twelve years old; she began to wonder if there were not something more than met the eye in this bewitching woodland and gray, mysterious dwelling. As she thought thus, she turned to steal away, and there, before her in the forest pathway, stood a young man, with a singularly and significantly pleasing face, clad from head to foot in a long, warm coat of the same soft gray which Quirlicue had always worn. He smiled at the child's astonished look, and something in the smile seemed strangely familiar to Nannie. Before her shrewd common sense could interfere, her vivid imagination leaped to her lips. Courage was hers at all times.

"Oh!" she cried, springing forward, "are you the Prince?"

"Are you Nannie?" was the instant reply; and,

lo! the Prince had dropped upon one knee, in true fairy-tale fashion, and, taking both her small brown hands in his, had kissed her with all the loving assurance of an old friend. Nannie's eyes grew bigger and darker; her cheeks glowed. The Prince gazed upon her with delight.

"Were — were you really Quirlicue?"

The Prince smiled. "Who knows?" he said gayly. "At all events, I am myself now. Come, Nannie, let us go to the Beautiful Princess."

He took her hand and led her back along the forest path, and as they went, imagination quieted and common sense revived. Memory began to work also. Nannie had surely seen those eyes and that smile before, though in her mind they had never before been associated with a blonde moustache and such an alarming aggregate of inches. She stole a quiet, sidewise look at her companion; up, up! how far her eyes had to travel before they reached his face! Suddenly his eyes met hers, and he smiled again. Then Nannie remembered. He saw that she did.

"You know me now," he said, laughing.

"Yes, you are Jack. How glad Beautiful will be!"

"Will she?"

"But how did you get back all of a sudden? And why did n't Beautiful know you were coming? And *what* is that great gray castle?"

"Five years is not 'all of a sudden,' Nannie; it is an eternity; and Beautiful did know, only not the precise day; and the gray castle is my old home, — Uncle Llew's home."

"I never saw it before."

"No, you were so little when I went away, and the poor old castle has been closed all these years."

"All the same, it is a perfect fairy tale, only — where is Quirlicue?"

"Where was he?"

"He came to meet me on Wednesday, and ran home again safe and sound; for I watched him pop into his nest. To-day he is nowhere. I have called and called." Nannie's voice shook a little over the last words.

Jack Trevelyan thought a moment before he answered. He thought he could make a pretty close guess as to Quirlicue's fate, but it would never do to tell Nannie.

"In all the fairy tales I can remember," he said at length, "there were such disappearances. No doubt there is some good reason for this one. Quirlicue has vanished, and I have come. Perhaps

some day I shall vanish and Quirlicue will come. Who knows? What 's Quirlicue to me, or I to Quirlicue? Only the fairies can answer that question. Meantime I advise you to be a very good girl, and make the most of me while you have me."

His words were light and gay, but his eyes were serious. Nannie was no ordinary child, to meet such a loss in an ordinary way. He could see that it went deep. There were few words and no tears, — that fell, — but it was a very wistful little face that lifted itself to his at his cheery words; and an intensity of pathos lay in the brief, beseeching plea, —

"Don't vanish, Jack!"

All the rest of the way he devoted himself to making her forget, but was compelled to confess to himself that his success was a matter for grave doubt. Only, as they neared the house, Nannie's smiles came back for a space as she thought of the Princess and her surprise.

"Come straight up here with me," she said to Jack, and led him to the door of the Emerald Palace. The moon was lit; the room was full of dim, interlacing shadows; the Princess sat at the old spinet. Suddenly a swift, sharp intuition came to Nannie. Was all her old world crumbling beneath her feet? What had she done? whom had she

brought into her own peculiar paradise? For a moment the child's heart sank within her. Then the Princess turned and smiled upon her, and self died. Nannie came bravely forward.

"Beautiful," she said slowly, — and both her hearers felt the sweet nobility in her childish tones, — "my Quirlicue is gone; but I have brought you the Prince."

It is quite possible to have a friend who is very dear and familiar, and yet not to know him when you see him. Nannie had known and loved Jack Trevelyan all her life, but she had not seen him for five years, and five from eleven is a vast subtraction. Small wonder if, remembering the middy of nineteen, she hesitated for a moment over the lieutenant of twenty-four. Jack had been with the sea-fairies and the mermaids, and we all know that people never come back quite the same from such an experience. As Nannie, self-banished to the dimly lighted bedroom, studied the familiar daguerreotype which always stood open on Beautiful's table, she felt, without being able to express the feeling, even to herself, that it argued much for Jack that he should have kept unchanged the sweet, strong look in his eyes, and the sunny smile by which she recog-

nized him. He must have held fast to his talisman through all the dangers and difficulties which beset those who go forth to seek their fortunes. He must be the True Prince. In that case, there was no help for it. Never was it known that the True Prince failed to win the Beautiful Princess. Should she be the wicked sister, striving to overthrow and destroy their happiness? Never! Besides, it would be of no use. Plots of that sort always recoiled to the destruction of the plotters. And it was already too late; she herself had brought them together. Why, that was the work of the Good Fairy! Was she a Good Fairy? She had never thought of that. A great seriousness settled down upon the little face. There was a low murmur of happy voices going on beyond the curtained archway, but Nannie heard nothing. She had suddenly come face to face with a deep experience. She walked slowly over to the big chair by the window, and sat down to think. All these years she had lived in fairyland as a care-free, favored visitant; now, all at once, she felt that there could be no such thing. Fairyland was not for mere mortals: it was for those who did its work. For fairies, good or bad, — one or the other, — there was no half way: to ban or to bless; to spoil or to serve. Nannie could not have put it into words, but

it was in her heart, — the voice of the woods, the message of the flowers, the song of the ceaseless brook. Cheer, courage, purity, loving service: it was a high office to which she found herself called. The clouds had broken; the real moon was casting shadows now all over lawn and garden. Nannie could see the fir-cones lying on the snow, and the withered stalks of tall garden lilies. Everything had its character to record upon the clean, white surface that sent its diamond sparkles back. One shadow was moving; a tiny shadow that sped swiftly along on clinging, scampering feet. The little field-mouse was running home to her children under the stone wall. A warm, loving feeling welled up in Nannie's heart as she watched the small, earnest creature; a feeling of joy and comradeship in the manifold, busy life of the great, teeming earth. It was sweet to live for others; it was a beautiful thing to be alive! Alone in the gracious moonlight, with a worldful of friends about her, Nannie put forth her hand and took up her staff of office, — her fairy wand.

There was something about the Princess that evening which no one had ever seen before, — a new light in the lovely eyes, a tenderer curve to the sweet lips, and on her hand a great, gleaming pearl. Nannie was quick to note them all, but she said

never a word; only, when her early bedtime came, she took the slender hand in hers and looked gravely, silently, for a moment, at the exquisite thing that had lain hidden beneath deep waters. Suddenly she let fall the hand, and, flinging both arms about her sister's neck, clung closely, almost breathlessly. Then she turned and fled, and no one saw her again that night.

The Princess went downstairs.

"Grandmother," she said, "do not speak of this to Nannie; and please let no one else speak of it, if you can help it. She accepts it, but to talk about it would be to break her heart."

CHAPTER VIII

THE PUMPKIN COACH

The days shortened and sped. It was the middle of December, and Christmas would soon be a present fact. Brown Pink found himself thrown a good deal upon his own hands for entertainment. Aunt Debby's needles were flying faster than ever, to finish some dainty work which must be done by the twenty-third; and Miss Dorry had not even time to bring her work home, but was busy at the studio as long as daylight lasted. Even Maria caught the prevailing spirit of high pressure, and flew round as if she were up to her eyes in holiday preparations, which she never was. Mr. Penfold was away again. He had gone and come frequently of late, and Brown Pink missed him sorely. The first-floor front had become a place of untold delight to the sociable little fellow whose resources were so limited. On pleasant days, when all other children were at school (for Aunt Debby regarded street acquaintance as little less malignant than smallpox), he was allowed

to play on the sunny south sidewalk from ten to twelve, — within the limits of two houses above and three below, — but the remainder of the time must be spent indoors, now that the weather was so cold. He could read, that was one comfort. Aunt Debby, haunted by the dread of constitutional tendency and individual precocity, had never attempted to teach even his letters to this last male representative of the Otises; but when Brown Pink took matters into his own hands and requested a primer, she bought for him the best to be had, and was always ready to answer his questions, provided they were not hopelessly beyond her, which they frequently were. The little self-made man had progressed so well in his pursuit of knowledge that he had already two books in his library besides the primer, namely, Barbauld's Lessons and Miss Edgeworth's Frank; and Miss Dorry had promised that when her aunt in New Brunswick should send her the box of home goodies which never failed at New Year's time, there should be in it the old green fairy-book of her own childhood, wherein Cinderella and the White Cat, Beauty and the Beast, and fair Briar Rose dwelt forever lovely and immortal. Miss Dorry had other plans, also, which she did not confide to Brown Pink, although they concerned him nearly; and so had

Aunt Debby; and so had Maria, whose projected goodness made her so cross meantime that it may have been a matter for doubt whether Brown Pink would gain very much, in the long run, after all. Meanwhile, the little fellow read his story-books, made the most of his open-air privilege, and drew largely upon that almost inexhaustible fund of hope and patience which such small, unrecognized heroes possess.

But the whale was coming which should swallow up all these minor Jonahs and include them in itself. Mr. Penfold appeared, one bright morning, as suddenly as he had vanished; and while Brown Pink pulled his small sled briskly up and down the short right of way which he so contentedly made the most of, the older gentleman sought Aunt Debby, now his stanch and devoted friend, for a prolonged conversation, which, to judge by the genial expression of both faces at its conclusion, must have been of a very satisfactory and seasonable nature. Aunt Debby, indeed, was so unusually beaming all the rest of the day that Brown Pink's sober, sympathetic little face lit up whenever he looked at her; and before night the contagion had spread through the whole house. Mr. Penfold hummed a tune over his big folios, — even keeping it up, in a desultory way,

between spasmodic puffs at his long pipe, — and if Miss Dorry's face could look any brighter than it always did, it certainly managed to after a little whispered communication held with Aunt Debby in the china closet. Even Maria smiled inadvertently, once or twice, in a rusty, unused sort of way, and so far forgot herself as to give a chuckle instead of a growl when Aunt Debby asked her if there was butter enough to last the week out. It was a most amazing state of things all round; but Brown Pink's philosophy, which stood him in such good stead under adverse circumstances, failed him not a whit in these altered conditions; and after a few amazed glances at the happy faces by which he found himself surrounded, he gave himself up to the general hilarity, and his merry, irresistible little laugh broke more than once upon the staid quiet of the prim old house.

Christmas, that year, fell upon a Wednesday. Aunt Debby's knitting was all done by Monday night, and immediately after breakfast on Tuesday the pretty, fleecy things were brought forth from the big press, where they had been stored for weeks, and laid in a rainbow heap on the round table, to be folded and pinned in papers for delivery. Aunt Debby was dainty always about everything, and it

was a pretty sight to see her sitting there, in her gray gown and white kerchief, among the soft blue, and rose, and violet, and creamy things which her own hands had created. Then, too, the white tissue paper was so fresh and crisp, and Aunt Debby did her work so deftly, and the pile of snowy parcels, as it grew, was so very suggestive of Christmas stockings and all sorts of mysterious delights, that Brown Pink, overseeing the whole from his red, wooden armchair near the fire, felt a wonderful elation and sense of importance such as came to him but this once in the whole uneventful year.

When the parcels were all done up, with a neat little bill pinned to each, and laid into a large, shallow basket, such as bakers use to carry their loaves in, Maria made her appearance, shawled and bonneted, to take them round to the various people who had ordered them. This was quite an event in Maria's life, also, and her lips were pursed up as tightly as their thickness would allow, while the fat, abnormal rose, above her grizzled wool, bobbed energetically as she nodded her comprehension of Aunt Debby's directions.

"And, Maria, you had better take a car down town again when you get through; for it's quite a distance, and there will be a good deal to do be-

fore" — Aunt Debby broke off with a smile, and the fat rose bobbed so hard that Brown Pink fully expected to see it go flying into the fire, and was rather disappointed that it did not.

When the front door had shut upon Maria and the basket, and the house quieted down so that the old clock had the floor again, it came across Brown Pink's mind, all at once, that his aunt had left her sentence unfinished, — a most unusual thing. He thought he would rather like to know what the rest of it would have been.

"Aunt Debby," he began, turning the red chair carefully round upon its hind legs, so as to bring himself face to face with the lady he was addressing, — "Aunt Debby" — But there he stopped short. Something very strange had happened. Aunt Debby was working away with a needle — not a knitting-needle — upon a white, delicate thing such as he had never seen before, and the top of her head looked very queer. Now Brown Pink had never in his whole life seen Aunt Debby without a cap on. It had not even occurred to him that the three-cornered bit of muslin, with its two floating muslin strings, ever *could* come off any more than the head itself. No matter how early Aunt Debby left her room in the morning, the cap was always there. He had wakened

many a time in the night to find it bending over him; and once, when he tumbled down the second-floor stairs, Aunt Debby had come limping out of her room in a great hurry, only half dressed, but with the cap firmly in place; for he had taken careful note of that fact as well as a rapidly swelling eye would allow.

It was off now, and lying on the little work-table; and where it had been was only smooth brown hair, streaked liberally with gray, and one funny little spot, about as big as a half-dollar, that looked pink and shiny, like the head of the new baby next door. Somehow Brown Pink felt sorry for Aunt Debby when he saw that spot. He was a little fellow of nice instincts, and they led him now to bestow his entire attention upon his aunt's work, since it was evident that her own interest in it had made her forget what she was usually so mindful of. The question which he began with had been startled out of his mind, but another occurred to him, and he asked it.

"What is that pretty stuff, Aunt Debby?"

"This? Why, lace, child; point lace." Aunt Debby fingered lovingly the exquisite remnant of better days.

"Did Jack Frost make it? It looks just like the pictures that come on my window."

"Jack Frost's lace does n't last, child; he has to make it new every night. This is years old. My mother wore it when she was married, and she gave it to me for my first ball dress." Aunt Debby was talking more to herself than to Brown Pink.

"Ball dress, Aunt Debby? Why, that was what Cinderella had! Did you ever go to a ball, like Cinderella? And did you dance with the Prince?"

A strange look crept into Aunt Debby's face, — half pained, half smiling; it had been so many years since any one had mentioned the Prince.

"That reminds me, William," she said quietly, after a little pause, "that Mr. Penfold wants to see you. Perhaps you had better run right up now."

Brown Pink went. Evidently, Aunt Debby would rather not answer his question, so he would not repeat it; but it interested him very much; and why should it have reminded her of Mr. Penfold?

The front room door stood ajar, as it mostly did nowadays, and Brown Pink went right in, sure of a welcome. Mr. Penfold was reading, as usual, and the long pipe depended from his lips, the fat, brown bowl of it cuddled cosily away in his left hand, while his right hand held the book. The latter was promptly laid aside, however, upon Brown Pink's

entrance, and the arm thus set free drew the little fellow into close companionship.

"William," said Mr. Penfold, "how would you like to take a drive in Cinderella's coach?"

Brown Pink's eyes opened very wide, and he had no answer ready for this most amazing question. How could Mr. Penfold have known that he had been thinking of Cinderella all the way upstairs? It was a very astonished face that was raised to the kindly gray eyes which watched it so closely. The next question was still queerer.

"Did it ever occur to you that Aunt Debby might be a fairy godmother?"

Now it *had* occurred to Brown Pink, more than once, as he watched Aunt Debby in her soft gray gown and white cap, with her slender, dark crutch-stick beside her, to wish that she might prove something of the sort, and that the crutch-stick might all at once develop magic qualities and be waved over the prosaic details of life with transforming effect; but he had privately exploded the theory, to his great chagrin, some days ago, so he was enabled to reply this time very promptly.

"Yes, sir; but she is n't, I 'm afraid."

"What makes you think so?"

"Why, last time we had baked beans for dinner,

I thought ortolans, like what the White Cat had, would be nicer; so I touched the dish with Aunt Debby's stick, but it stayed beans." Brown Pink spoke dejectedly.

Mr. Penfold rose hurriedly and laid his pipe on the mantel. He stood there, looking into the fire, with his back to everything else, for two or three minutes, and when he turned round again, the heat, or something, had made his face very red.

"William," said he gravely, "don't you know that wands lose their virtue if ordinary people, like you and me, try to use them?"

"Oh," said Brown Pink, in a tone of great relief, "was that it? Was it because I am an or—or—ornindary person?"

"I think it must have been. You and I will have to make the best of what is set before us: we cannot change it; but Aunt Debby is no ordinary person, I am sure of that, and as for Miss Dorry, — don't you think she is a little like Cinderella?"

"I don't know. She 's beautiful, and good, and she wears a brown dress, and sits by the fire a good deal; but she has n't any wicked sisters, nor any cruel stepmother."

"So much the better for her! But there are a good many ways for people to have a hard time in

this world, William, besides cruel stepmothers, and I believe Miss Dorry is Cinderella. I also believe that she could coax the Fairy Godmother to use her wand and give us all a regular fairy Christmas. If you could spend a whole week wherever you wanted to, where would you spend it?"

"In the Beast's palace," replied Brown Pink promptly. "I love the Beast, and I want to see his roses dreadfully."

"H'm, well, I believe that would suit me as well as anything, provided Cinderella is willing. Suppose you ask her. Tell her that you and I both want to go, and — But hark! Isn't that she just shutting the door? We 'll both ask her." So when Miss Dorry reached the top of the stairs, there stood two boys, hand in hand, waiting for her; and no sooner did she catch sight of the old boy's face, with its mixture of fun and mystery, than her own face became funny and mysterious, too. Brown Pink looked wonderingly from one to the other, and, recalling all the queer things which he had seen and heard lately, began to feel queer himself. There must be some fairy influence at work, surely.

"Cinderella," said Mr. Penfold, with his courtly bow, "William, here, and myself, knowing that you have great influence with the Fairy Godmother, have

come to beg you to use it in our behalf. We want to pay a visit to the Beast's palace, which I suppose you know all about; and if you would only persuade the Godmother to produce a coach and pair, with a coachman who knows the way, we could all step right in and go, just as well as not."

"The very thing!" said Miss Dorry, nodding merrily; "when would you like to start?"

"Just at dusk, I think. We must be there in time to hang up our stockings, — hey, William?"

But Brown Pink was beyond words. A fairy Christmas! Never had he even dreamed of such a joy. What could it possibly be like? His blue eyes deepened and glowed, and a soft rosiness spread all over his little brown face. Mr. Penfold and Miss Dorry looked at each other and smiled. It did not matter what was for dinner that day, — everything had a magic flavor; and after dinner, at Miss Dorry's suggestion, Brown Pink went up to her room and lay down on the lounge to "think about it." Miss Dorry covered him with a soft, warm shawl, pulled down the shades, and left him. She first sought Aunt Debby, and then went down town; but before she was halfway there, Brown Pink was sound asleep. The afternoon was well advanced when he woke. The clock in the neighboring

belfry was striking four, and Miss Dorry sat beside him, with the daintiest bonnet on her head. The shades had all been pulled up again, and the waning light, made brighter by a fresh fall of snow, shone in through the windows. Brown Pink never did things by halves. He slept soundly, and was wide awake again as soon as his eyes opened. When he saw Miss Dorry, he kicked off the shawl and sat up directly.

"Are we going?" he asked eagerly.

"If you can wait long enough to get your things on. It is cold out of doors, and you must be wrapped up warm; let me put on these leggings and overshoes."

Brown Pink thought it must be very cold indeed; for not only did Miss Dorry muffle him in coat, cap, and comforter, but when he was all ready, and she had made herself ready too, she caught up the big shawl from the lounge and wrapped him up in it, head and all, till he could only peep out with one eye, and found the going downstairs a very slow and stately ceremony indeed. When they reached the lower hall, there was Aunt Debby, in a gray cloak and peaked hood, looking more than ever like a veritable fairy godmother. She smiled and nodded to Brown Pink, and, lifting her crutch-stick, tapped

three times upon the closed door. Instantly it flew open, and there stood Mr. Penfold, in his fur coat, while, drawn up beside the curbstone, was the prettiest dark green coach, with a pair of white horses, and a coachman all covered with shiny buttons. Before Brown Pink, with his one eye, could take it all in, he found himself placed in a soft cushioned corner, with Aunt Debby beside him and Miss Dorry and Mr. Penfold opposite. The coach door banged to, and they were off. After winding in and out among narrower streets, they turned at last into a broad, beautiful avenue lined with houses such as Brown Pink had never seen. Already lights began to twinkle in the windows, and every shop was bright with gas jets.

On flew the white horses, with tossing manes and jingling bells; the city was left behind; they were out in the country, — the real, beautiful country. Brown Pink's nose was flattened against the plate-glass window, at the imminent risk of freezing to it. Trees, fences, and fields, white with snow, flashed past him as the tireless horses sped on, and the broad runners of the coach slid silently through the soft snow. Not a word was spoken; Brown Pink's eyes were on the wonders without, and all the other eyes were on him. Now and then the three grown people

BETWEEN GREAT PEARLY GATES

exchanged swift smiles of sympathy. At length the horses began to climb a steep hill, and the speed slackened. It would have been quite dark, but for the snow which lay smooth and spotless along the roadsides, rising into great billowy drifts, here and there, capping every post and rail with whiteness, and draping trees and bushes with rich, feathery foliage. Presently the coach turned between great pearly gates, and the horses broke into a trot again. Elms of a century's growth stood in close ranks on either side, and bent their snow-laden branches in grand triumphal arches above the white horses, the green coach, and the enchanted child they bore along so swiftly. Truly, this was Fairyland. Suddenly a flood of light confronted them, and the coach stopped. Yes, this must be the Beast's palace, lit up to welcome them. The windows were all ablaze, and the great doors were thrown open. Brown Pink, disencumbered of the big shawl, found himself led up broad stone steps and into a spacious hall, where servants stood in waiting, and whence wide archways opened out into bewildering splendor beyond.

"Brown Pink," said Miss Dorry, "you know Beauty went right to bed and did not see the Beast until morning. I suppose you must do the same." Brown Pink's eyes were roaming eagerly about the

wonderful place he found himself in ; but they came back instantly, with a smile, to Miss Dorry's face, and he slid his little hand into hers with entire readiness to do as he was bidden. People in fairy tales always obey unquestioningly.

A pretty maid came forward to take their things and show them to their rooms; but first Brown Pink bade Mr. Penfold good-night, with all his heart shining in his eyes.

"Well, William," said that gentleman, looking down into the earnest, upturned face ; " here we are ; and here we will stay, for the present at least. When you have had your supper and are all ready to go to sleep, just run down to me with one of your stockings, and we will hang it up. Santa Claus won't have much trouble to find his way through this big chimney."

So Brown Pink mounted the wide stairway, holding fast to the polished rail and taking two steps upon each generous stair. The hall above was long and broad, and brightly lighted, with doors standing open on either side into sumptuous bedchambers. Aunt Debby and Miss Dorry had each a great square room, with a bright fire and a big four-posted bedstead all carving and curtains; while tucked in between, with a door opening into each, was the

cosiest, quaintest, safest little nest for Brown Pink. Here stood a snowy white bed, and on the bed lay a gay little crimson dressing-gown embroidered in gold braid, with a pair of fur-lined crimson leather slippers to match. There was a round table beside the fire in Miss Dorry's room ; and on the table a silver porringer and spoon, a loaf of sweet white bread, a jug of creamy milk, and six enormous, perfumy red strawberries among their dark green leaves.

Brown Pink ate and luxuriated. Nothing surprised him, — one expects strawberries and splendor in Fairyland ; but everything was fully up to his expectations, which is an experience permitted to few. When the last berry had been slowly and satisfactorily absorbed, he proceeded to get out of his ordinary clothes and into those which the Beast, with his usual forethought, had provided for him. It must be confessed, they were eminently becoming to the aristocratic little face and figure. Aunt Debby and Miss Dorry followed, at a respectful distance, as this gorgeous personage descended the grand stairway, one hand grasping the rail, a small, commonplace gray stocking dangling from the other. Mr. Penfold, his fine countenance a study, stood waiting by the fire. The child's simple, unquestioning acceptance of everything, and his deep, intense enjoyment,

which betrayed itself chiefly in an added dignity and repose of manner, were to this large-hearted, somewhat eccentric man inexpressibly charming. Together they hung the gray stocking, making it fast to the heavy brass fixture beside the chimney which restrained the shovel and tongs. Brown Pink regarded it as it hung there, limp and empty, and vague visions of glorious possibilities passed in mental review before his trustful soul. He drew a deep, full breath of happiness, and looked up into his friend's face for sympathy, finding it there in abundant measure. Then Mr. Penfold caught up crimson wrapper, gay slippers, small boy, and all, and making short work of the long stairway, delivered him over to Miss Dorry, who promptly tucked her charge away in the white bed and left him to marvelous dreams. But amid all the visions which "danced in his head" that night, Brown Pink never caught sight of a lonely forest path, with the Christmas moon weaving silver threads in and out among dark hemlocks and leafless oaks, along which walked a prince and princess, each carrying a basket; while on before them, with her arms full, sped a good fairy in a scarlet cloak.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE BEAST'S GARDEN

When Brown Pink woke next morning, he found his room full of a soft, golden light. The sun was up and shining with all his might; evidently very impatient for some one to pull aside the pretty curtains which were trying to keep him out. These curtains were white, like the bed, and the walls, and the carpet; but all over their whiteness ran tangled vines, and among the vines went hopping and fluttering, in and out, ever so many little gray birds. Chirping, too, for Brown Pink could hear them, yet moving so softly, so silently, that not a rustle could be detected. They seemed to glide over the white surface like shadows; but how could shadows chirp and chatter and gossip as they were doing? It was a great puzzle to Brown Pink, and after he had wondered for a long time, he was fain to call Miss Dorry to his aid. She came, with all her pretty hair hanging down over her shoulders, and when she heard the little boy's eager story, she moved across

to the window and gently drew aside the curtain. Then Brown Pink beheld a pretty picture. There stood Miss Dorry, in her white wrapper, holding back the soft white muslin drapery, and through the long, low window poured the impatient sunshine in a flood, lighting up bright gleams in the wavy brown hair, flashing back sharply from the mirror, which utterly refused to be as accommodating as the window-panes, and playing all over the walls in rippling waves of gold. Without was a white, enchanted woodland; and close about the window, where tangled vine stems came clambering up from below, were the birds whose shadows he had seen. Charming little creatures, with dusky wings, and bright red caps on their heads; fearless little creatures, hopping along the broad stone ledge, clinging and twisting and fluttering among the bare brown vine stems, paying no heed to Miss Dorry save to cock the red caps on one side for a moment, and regard her curiously with quick, observant eyes; while every least feather was fluffed out to its fullest extent, and every small throat was vocal with incessant chirping. Brown Pink sat up in bed and watched them. Suddenly he remembered that it was Christmas Day: his stocking was waiting for him! "Miss Dorry," said he, "have my old clothes van-ished?"

"Where did you leave them, little boy?"

"On the chair by your fire."

"Suppose you come and see. It is time for you to be dressed."

So he tumbled out of bed, and ran into Miss Dorry's room and straight to the chair where he had left his small speckled jacket and his small speckled trousers and the odd gray stocking. They were nowhere to be seen. Instead, some one had placed there the prettiest suit of dark blue braided cloth, with dark blue stockings to match, and below, on the floor, stood a pair of little shiny shoes with big shiny buckles on them. Brown Pink was too absorbed in making his own toilet to have eyes to spare for anything else; but when he was all ready, and Miss Dorry was tying his neck-ribbon, he discovered that she looked very fine, too, for she wore the daintiest little breakfast jacket, all pink and white like her cheeks; and when they went to Aunt Debby's door to bid her good-morning, lo and behold! she also had a new gown!

They all went down together, and then it would appear that Mr. Penfold had not been asleep at all; for there he stood before the fire, just where he had stood last night, looking at the gray stocking. But how the stocking had changed! Brown Pink's

plump little legs had never begun to fill and stretch it as it was stretched now; and Brown Pink himself had never taken it from Maria's hand with half the alacrity with which he now received it from Mr. Penfold's. There were wonderful things in that stocking, far too wonderful to describe; Brown Pink had never seen such things. But when he had taken them all out, and the stocking hung limp and empty as before, he discovered, leaning up against the shovel and tongs, a large square package. It was done up in white paper, tied with white ribbon, and within was a book, — a great, beautiful book, almost as big as Aunt Debby's Bible, with dark green covers and gold edges to the leaves; and inside those covers were all the fairy stories which he had ever heard, and many more, with charming colored pictures of the people they told about; and the very first picture in the book, the picture of Cinderella herself in her brown gown, was also the picture of Miss Dorry.

While they were at breakfast in a room which was all one could ask, even in a fairy palace, Mr. Penfold told Brown Pink that the Beast was very glad he had come; and that when he had quite finished his fruit, and oatmeal, and buttered roll, and the plump little bird which no one objected to

his calling an ortolan, the master of the house would be happy to see him in the garden. Brown Pink nodded gravely; but he was never in a hurry, so he finished his breakfast leisurely, and, when he was quite through, folded his napkin with great precision, and then, slipping from his big chair, came round to Mr. Penfold and took his hand. "We will all go," he said graciously.

They crossed the hall again to the large drawing-room, which was a very splendid place indeed, and crossed the drawing-room to where heavy double doors shut off what lay beyond. "Cinderella," said Mr. Penfold (he never called Miss Dorry anything but Cinderella now), "you may pull one door while I pull the other." So they both pulled, and the doors slid noiselessly apart; and beneath a flood of sunshine which came pouring down through crystal walls, and a flood of perfume which mingled itself with the sunshine, Brown Pink found himself standing in a perfect wilderness of roses. Pink, white, dark crimson, creamy buff; above, beside, before, and behind him, — roses everywhere; half blown, full blown, and in long, pointed buds. Truly, Maria's best bonnet was eclipsed! So absorbed was Brown Pink in the diligent use of three of his five senses that he quite forgot the master of the house until a

queer sound, half pleased, half impatient, made him turn and look behind him. There stood the most magnificent creature he had ever beheld. A shaggy, golden-haired monster, with white breast and feet, a great waving plume of a tail, and two dark, deep-set, wistful, loving eyes that were gazing straight into Brown Pink's as no savage, soulless eyes could ever have borne to gaze. Then, for the first time, the three onlookers realized that even a philosopher may be carried away by his feelings. Down went the roses, hitherto held so tenderly in the boy's hand, and down went Brown Pink on his little dark blue knees. He threw both arms about the shaggy neck, and laid his curly head against the big, soft head of this dumb friend for whom, all these years, his child's heart had unconsciously been yearning. "Oh, my Beast, my Beast!" the little fellow cried; and for a moment nothing stirred among the roses save the stately, waving plume. Then Miss Dorry fell on her knees beside Brown Pink and took boy and dog into her arms together; Aunt Debby bent to sniff at a rose and left two dewdrops on its velvet petals; and Mr. Penfold cleared his throat with great energy.

"You see, my dear madam," said the latter, drawing Aunt Debby's hand through his arm and lead-

ing her on, down the conservatory, "I was right. Boys are not girls, the best of 'em; they need brute companionship of some sort, — dogs, or horses, or other boys: all three, if possible; though I think, myself, that until they are old enough to discriminate, the dumb ones are the safest. My nephew, Jack, was reared on that principle, and he has turned out very fairly well, as you saw last evening. Now I want you to think seriously of that little plan of mine. Don't decide in a hurry; take the week for it. Let me know your mind on the last day of the year, and then if you agree with me, as I trust you may, we can begin the New Year as we mean to keep on."

They had reached the limit of the rose-house, and, before going on into the next conservatory, Mr. Penfold turned and waited for the others to join them. Brown Pink came striding along with one hand on the Beast's head, and a light in his blue eyes that had never been there before. Oliver and his happy family were quite cast into the shade. What were all his animals to this comprehensive Beast, who united in his one glorious person the strength of the lion, the meekness of the lamb, the wisdom of the serpent, the affability of the calf, and the smile of the bear?

Mr. Penfold threw open the second door, and, led by the Beast and his guest of honor, the happy party strolled on through this wonderful midwinter garden. There were all sorts of things in the second house, — carnations, azalias, heliotrope, geraniums, fuchsias, abutilons, white-starred daphne, waxy jasmine blossoms, and the golden flower-clusters of acacia. Brown Pink poked his small nose into one after another, like a beautified bumble-bee; and Miss Dorry's hands were full. Mr. Penfold produced a large shallow basket and a pair of garden scissors, and bade Cinderella cut whatever she pleased. "The house is full of dishes," he said; "and they all need filling. Perhaps you will be good enough to see that they are kept supplied." So Miss Dorry cut, and Mr. Penfold carried the basket. Aunt Debby went back, after they had seen the beauties of the second house: she could not be on her feet for long at a time; but the others kept on, through the fernery and the violet-house, which was the sweetest of all, until they came to the grapery, wherein were only vines, clambering all over the walls, with great bunches of black and white grapes hanging down, so full and heavy that it was a marvel how they kept from tumbling. There was a little room at the farther end of the grapery, with

easy chairs and a round table in it, and here Mr. Penfold made them sit down to rest; and, taking Miss Dorry's scissors, cut for them each a bunch of grapes. Miss Dorry's bunch was white and Brown Pink's black; but as there were far more grapes on each than one person could possibly eat, they shared with one another and with Mr. Penfold, and made a delicious lunch. The Beast sat before them, tall and stately, following every movement with his eyes, until Mr. Penfold, first removing the seeds from a big black grape, popped it into his ready cavern of a mouth, where it speedily disappeared, to his evident satisfaction. After that, Brown Pink could scarcely be induced to keep any for himself, though he did reserve half his bunch for Aunt Debby until Mr. Penfold told him that she should have a whole one, when he and the Beast finished theirs together in perfect harmony.

In the afternoon, the green coach came to the door again, and they took another drive through a white, enchanted country. Miss Dorry said it was like the garden in the story of Nutcracker and Sugar-dolly, where the paths and trees were all of sparkling sugar. As they dashed along, Mr. Penfold exclaimed: "There is Nannie, little fairy!" and Brown Pink, turning his head hastily, caught a

glimpse of brown curls, flashing eyes and teeth, and a fluttering scarlet cloak. Was that a fairy?

Nannie was on her way home from Cap'n Joe's. She had been to deliver the new comforter and mittens, and a box of hoarhound candy, which confection the Cap'n held in high esteem. In some respects the visit had proved eminently satisfactory, in others very trying. The old man was delighted with his gifts, which was most gratifying; but, on the other hand, he was full of the news about the Princess, and to answer questions on this topic was a sore trial to Nannie.

"So sister may shes going to get maried," wrote the Cap'n in the blank book.

Nannie nodded sorrowfully.

"To leftenant Trevelyan aint it?"

Another nod.

"Well hes a good likly felow a fine felow I am glad ont."

As Nannie was hardly prepared to endorse this sentiment in full, she took no notice of it.

"Day sot?" wrote the Cap'n.

Nannie shook her head energetically.

"Come plesant wether I supose Shall you be bridsmade?"

Nannie seized the pencil in desperation. She had

nothing especial to say, but at least she could keep the Cap'n from talking. So she wrote hurriedly: —

"Mr. Penfold has come home."

It was now Cap'n Joe's turn to nod.

"He has had the castle beautifully fixed up, and the greenhouses are full of flowers."

Another nod; a nod of deep interest. Nannie was no gossip ordinarily, but this was an unusual occasion; she felt that she was steering her ship successfully into deep water, and scribbled away for dear life.

"He has brought company to spend the holidays."

Cap'n Joe's eyebrows went up, — the right a trifle higher than the left; this was interrogation. It meant, "What sort of company?" Nannie understood.

"An old lady, Miss Otis, and a young lady, Miss Dorry, and a little boy, Brown Pink."

Cap'n Joe studied over this item for some minutes; it seemed to puzzle him. Finally, to Nannie's horror, he fished out from his waistcoat pocket the merest stub of a pencil, and took matters into his own hands.

"He aint ben home this some time has he?"

"No," signaled Nannie.

"Not since the leftenant went away has he?"

"No."

"He aint going to get maried too think?"

Dreadful! Nannie could hear the breakers again; her ship was drifting upon the rocks. She shook her head vigorously. Cap'n Joe chuckled.

"It would not be supprizing niether Hes young yet and hansum maby they will be a dubble weding."

This was too much! Nannie rose hurriedly. For once the dumb surprise in the Cap'n's face was unheeded. She flung the red cloak about her, shook hands hastily, and ran. As she flew along like an unseasonable tanager, over the white snow, the coach from the Gray Castle came sliding along on its broad runners. Miss Dorry's pretty face was at the window, and, just beyond, Mr. Penfold's. Both looked surprisingly happy. Nannie slackened her pace, nodded and smiled, and as soon as they had passed, fell into a slow walk and deep thought.

The next day Nannie and the Princess and the Prince, who was spending his leave at the farm, all went over to the castle. Brown Pink was delighted. His first peep at royalty promised well for future experience, and he found the fairy all that a fairy should be. To be sure, she behaved very much like other people: nobody was changed into a bird or a

fish, and the Beast did not become a man; but, on the whole, Brown Pink preferred things as they were, so it did not matter. What she did was to contrive all sorts of delightful amusements out of the most commonplace material, which is a talent only possessed by fairies; and to tell him so many wonderful and interesting things about flowers that it was clear she must understand the making of them very thoroughly. The next day he and Miss Dorry spent at the Emerald Palace, while the Prince and his uncle went to Pandemonium, and there he saw as many remarkable things as any fortune-seeker of them all, besides adding a King and Queen to his list of royal acquaintance. This was a marvelous week! He began to wonder how time was passing in the outside world, and to speculate as to whether, when he should return to Warwick Park, he would find that it had been years instead of days. That always seemed a very sad feature of fairy tales. A year was a great deal to lose out of one's home life; but then he very reasonably reflected that as he had brought his entire family circle with him, they would all begin again on the same footing, and so find less to regret. His two worlds were getting so thoroughly mixed nowadays that it seemed to matter little which was which, or where wonderland ended

and commonplace-land began. There was no longer either beginning or end; life was like a crystal ball which, turn and twist it as he would, always presented the same bright surfaces, and filled the air with rainbows.

CHAPTER X

CINDERELLA'S BALL

It was the last day of the year, and in the Beast's palace great preparations were toward. There was to be a ball, — a real ball. For the second time in his life, Brown Pink was to be allowed to sit up until half-past nine; which fact proved so exciting that it was with the greatest difficulty he managed to lie quiet and keep his eyes shut for two whole hours in the afternoon, Aunt Debby having declared that upon this condition alone he might be permitted such unwonted license. All the morning Miss Dorry had been arranging flowers. There was scarcely a blossom left in the greenhouses, but the rooms were full of them. Miss Dorry's hands went flying about, and every vase, jar, and dish grew beautiful beneath her skillful fingers. The whole palace looked like a bower, with the Christmas greens still unfaded and the bright flowers everywhere. But Miss Dorry's face, strange to say, was not bright. There was a grave, wistful look in it

that Brown Pink had never seen before, and as her task neared completion, she seemed to linger over it as though reluctant to have done. All the time Brown Pink lay on his white bed with his eyes shut, while Aunt Debby thought him asleep, he was turning this problem over in his mind, and striving in vain to solve it. Just as he had finally given it up as a bad job, and opened his eyes again because Aunt Debby, to his great relief, declared it time to dress for the evening, Miss Dorry came softly into his room; and, lo! there was no longer any problem to solve! Her face was like a morning sky, all rose color and stars and deepening sunlight, and when she called Brown Pink to come and eat his supper and be made ready, her voice had in it the gladness of wakening birds. It was most surprising, but life was full of surprises to Brown Pink nowadays, so he wasted no further time over this one, but, since everything was evidently all right, turned his attention to his toilet. The Beast, or some one, had provided a new suit for him, — a suit in the fashion of his great-grandfather's time, with blue velvet coat and knee breeches, ruffled shirt, white silk stockings, and buckled shoes. When all this brave array was duly assumed, Brown Pink studied his reflection in the long mirror with great

approval. "I think I must be the Prince," he said naïvely, "for I look just like the picture in my fairy book." And he went off downstairs to communicate his impression to the Beast. But when he reached the drawing-room, a doubt crept over him; for there was Mr. Penfold, walking up and down, and looking so gay and handsome that Brown Pink could hardly believe his eyes. He was dressed for the ball, and, although he wore nothing more showy than plain black and white, there was something so very striking in his appearance that the white gloves and the rosebud in his buttonhole were hardly needed to emphasize the fact that this was a gala occasion. He nodded, well pleased, as Brown Pink advanced to meet him, and, taking a rose-colored carnation from a dish near by, fastened it on the lappel of the blue velvet coat.

"Now we are both fine, William, hey? How do you like Cinderella's ball, thus far?"

"Very much," said Brown Pink slowly; "*very* much. But I guess I must have made a mistake."

"How so?"

"Why, a minute ago I thought I was the Prince, but I've con-cluded I'm not."

"Who, then?" asked Mr. Penfold, with a twinkle.

"I guess you are, sir." And Brown Pink smiled

his wistful little one-sided smile, which only came when he had put himself aside also. Mr. Penfold laughed, but then he caught his small rival up in his arms and kissed him. He had never done that before. "We will both be princes, William," he said gently; "Cinderella has a large heart; she shall dance with us both. Look, here she comes, and the Fairy Godmother, too! Did you ever see such a sight as that?"

Brown Pink looked and looked, and kept on looking. There came Cinderella, floating down the stairs in a rosy cloud of gossamer, with tiny pink satin shoes on her feet instead of glass slippers; and with soft blush roses in her hair and at her belt. Her pretty neck and arms were partly bare, and in her white-gloved hands she carried a great cluster of the sweet pink roses. The Fairy Godmother came more slowly, aided by her crutch-stick. She was all in silvery gray, as a fairy godmother should be; and wherever the silver ended hung frosty laces, such as Brown Pink had seen once before. On her head was the pretty thing he had watched her make. While he was walking round these two visions and drinking in every detail, the doorbell rang, and presently in came the Good Old King and Queen in their court robes, and behind

them the True Prince, in his uniform, and the Beautiful Princess in something indescribable; it looked like moonlight on snow. "Is that the dress 'as silvery as the moon'?" whispered Brown Pink to Miss Dorry; and she whispered back, "I think it must be." Then Nannie came in alone; or she would have been alone but that Brown Pink spied her and ran to meet her with his face alight. Nannie wore a pale green gown, all floaty and filmy, and in her hand she carried a long-stemmed white rose. Her dark eyes had a sweet, serious light in them, and she looked more like a fairy than ever. Brown Pink would not call her anything else, and it seemed to please her when the little fellow said, "Oh, Fairy, I'm so glad you've come!"

"Have you always lived in Fairyland?" he asked her presently.

"Always," said Nannie; "but, Brown Pink, there's something very strange about Fairyland. People can only stay there on one condition."

"What is it?" asked Brown Pink.

"Why, when you've lived there a few years, you must either become a fairy yourself, or else" —

"What?"

"Or else you must go away and never come back again, never." Nannie's eyes had a very far-

away look in them, and her voice was not quite steady.

"Well," said Brown Pink, "then I'd be a fairy. That must be just as nice; nicer, for then you have a wand." And he touched the white rose with a respectful finger.

Nannie smiled. "Yes, it's nice, but it's hard, too. And if you're not careful, you may lose your wand and your wings, as Flitabout did."

"Who was Flitabout?"

"She was a fairy who grew idle and disobeyed the Queen."

"I wouldn't be an idle fairy; I'd be a good fairy, like you." And Brown Pink looked approvingly at the green gown and the thoughtful face above it.

"You wouldn't be a fairy at all, Brown Pink; boys don't have to be; you'd be a brownie."

"What are brownies?"

"Why, they are elves. They haven't any wands, nor any wings, and there doesn't seem to be so much expected of them. They have a good time, and they do a good deal of work; but they don't have to behave themselves as the fairies do, and when they play tricks on people, it's only funny. The Fairy King is a boy, I suppose, of course; but I never heard of any other boy fairy."

"Then I 'll be the King," said Brown Pink, cutting the Gordian knot with great ease and promptitude. "Who is that lady with the pleasant mouth?"

"That is Cousin Betty Vivian; she 's lovely. And she has the dearest old house, and the most beautiful flowers, and the most delicious cool well in the world."

"Is she a fairy, too?"

"Why," said Nannie, "I never thought of that! How queer of me! Of course she must be. People who have that clear, sweet, looking-out sort of face always are, I guess." And Nannie regarded Miss Betty intently from this new standpoint, while Brown Pink looked from one to the other, and decided that both faces answered well to the description. Certainly, neither could be in any immediate danger of losing her wand.

The rooms filled fast with gayly dressed people, and the ball began. Every one seemed very bright and happy, and the music was beautiful. Brown Pink felt that he could never again care very much for hand-organs. So this was a ball. He watched the bright-robed, laughing dancers as they glided past, and felt that it was no wonder Cinderella overstayed her time; that it was decidedly unreasonable

of the Fairy Godmother to expect anything else. The doors into the rose-house were thrown open, and there were soft-colored lanterns hung from the roof. Every little while a couple would stop dancing and stroll along the dimly lighted path among the roses. Presently, Brown Pink caught sight of Miss Dorry, whom he had not seen for some time. She was dancing with Mr. Penfold, and surely Cinderella and her prince could never have presented a more graceful and happy appearance. They made their way to the end of the long room, and paused at Brown Pink's side. "It 's your turn now, William," said Mr. Penfold generously; and before the little blue prince realized what was happening, he and the pink robe were swept together into the maze, and he was dancing! Round and round his Cinderella bore him; he felt himself caught up into the convolution of color and movement; it was like his kaleidoscope, which he had always longed to be inside of; now he was there. Just as he began to feel that the outside world would seem pleasant again for a change, the dreamy compulsion of the music ceased, and the whirling bits of color came to a standstill. He and Miss Dorry found themselves close by the curtained arch of the dining-room, and, as if she had timed the

arrival purposely, Cinderella drew aside the heavy portière and slipped herself and her small prince within. It was like the vanishing in the fairy tale, with two points of difference. The hands of the hall clock pointed to only half-past nine, and the big prince followed her so quickly that there was no escape. They each took one of Brown Pink's hands and led him up to the long table. What a sight was there! The sweeping white cloth was strewn with flowers, and heaped with most marvelous things. It was the kaleidoscope over again. "Fairy food," said Miss Dorry, smiling at the little fellow's breathless admiration; "fairy food that only lasts a night." She led him to a seat and put into his hands a tiny silver spoon. "You must take only what this spoon will hold at a time," she told him; and then she set before him a glass plate lightly heaped with something in the prettiest colors, that was creamy, and soft, and delicious, and very cold. Nannie had come in, too, and stood looking on. "It is like my magic paste," she said; but she did not tell Brown Pink its name, though she knew it very well. She knew also that the most delicious thing in the world is a mystery.

When this wonderful compound was all gone, Miss Dorry told Brown Pink that he might choose three

things from what he saw before him, but no more, for fairy food was not to be eaten like mere mortal oatmeal and bread and butter; and if he took more than was allowed, it would not only lose its pleasant taste, but also make him ill. So Brown Pink, after reflecting a good while and making several tours of the table, chose a little round white cake with a delicate brown bloom on it, and another white cake that was pointed, like an elf's cap, and went all to pieces the moment his sharp teeth touched it, as if it had been a sugar bubble, and one of the brown, melting things such as he had found in his butterfly box. When these were eaten, he turned away promptly, but with great reluctance, and followed Miss Dorry out of the room; but just as the portière was about to fall forever upon the fairy feast, he looked imploringly up into her face. "Miss Dorry," he said, "are you *sure* that magic paste will only last one night?"

Miss Dorry looked at Mr. Penfold and laughed softly. "Sure, little boy," she replied.

"Would the fairies mind if I tried to keep some?"

"No, Brown Pink; but it would not keep."

"I 'd like to try," said Brown Pink wistfully.

Miss Dorry lifted her eyebrows the least bit in

the world, and went back into the dining-room. She brought thence a glass plate, the counterpart of that which he had eaten from, with more of the fluffy, rainbow-colored cream. "Now, little prince," she said gravely, "you shall learn to believe what the fairies tell you. We will lock this up in the chimney cupboard where no one can meddle with it; but to-morrow morning you will find only a gray puddle in the plate."

Brown Pink felt rather guilty at the idea of doubting the fairies; but there was a good deal of "man" in the little fellow, for all his feminine upbringing, and he had a mind to prove things for himself; so he said good-night to Nannie and Mr. Penfold and followed Miss Dorry upstairs, casting longing looks behind him at the gay scene he was quitting. The music was just striking up again for the march to supper, and it seemed very hard to be obliged to go to bed; but before he had mounted the last stair, a great yawn caught him at unawares, and when his blue coat had been exchanged for his white nightgown, he began to think that bed was good, too. The last thing his eyes rested on before they closed for the night was the door of the chimney cupboard, wherein he was putting magic to the test; and the first thing he did when they opened

in the morning was to open that very door, also. Then he stood perfectly still, and swallowed his chagrin as best he might. The plate and spoon were there, untouched, but of all the glory of pink, and white, and yellow, and brown, so lightly heaped within the crystal dish, only a thin, dirty-looking pool remained. Brown Pink closed the cupboard softly and went back to bed. Never again would he doubt the fairies, or his dear Miss Dorry.

CHAPTER XI

HAPPY NEW YEAR

It was rather a sober little face that presented itself at the breakfast-table next morning. Brown Pink had wished every one a Happy New Year, and they had all wished him one, but somehow there seemed to be a cloud over its beginning. He made a more slender meal than usual, and made it more silently. When it was over, he threw himself down on the hall rug beside the Beast, and fondled the big soft head of his hairy friend with hands which expressed volumes. Evidently the Beast understood, for he looked into Brown Pink's grave face with most pathetic eyes, and the great pink tongue began to lap in and out as if its owner were vainly striving to voice a feeling too deep for his restricted powers of utterance. A week is so brief a time!

Mr. Penfold sat in his elbow-chair and watched the pantomime with a peculiar smile. Presently he said, "William, come here!"

Brown Pink at once tore himself away from the

Beast and stood obediently before his other good friend.

"What is the matter?"

Now Brown Pink's eyes had never been known to fall or blench before those of any other human being, and they did not this time; but while they fixed themselves on Mr. Penfold's, they gradually brimmed up and welled over, and the firm little mouth quivered piteously. Mr. Penfold quietly picked the boy up and set him on his knee. "William," said he, "let me tell you a story.

"Once upon a time there was a certain Prince, who kept growing richer and richer; but for all his wealth, he was not happy. In fact, it would have pleased him much better if he could only have grown poorer and poorer; for every time that there came to him a fresh supply of money, some of his dearest friends vanished, until, at last, he had but one remaining, and he was a little boy. If the Prince could even have kept him always, it might have answered very well: but little boys will grow up to be men, and then they must go out into the world to seek their fortunes; so when this little boy got to be a tall, strong young fellow, off he went, and the poor rich Prince was left all alone."

Brown Pink, who had laid his head on Mr. Pen-

fold's shoulder and was listening with all his ears, heaved a deep sigh of sympathy.

"Now," continued Mr. Penfold, "although a castle may be a very fine thing when it is full of pleasant people, it is the most dreary place in the world when one is alone in it; so the Prince shut it up, and, leaving his servants to care for things, went off on his travels. One day he came to a house where there lived a kind old lady. She was a very kind old lady indeed, so she said 'yes' when he asked if he might stay there for a time, and gave him the best room in the house. If the Prince had only known it, this kind old lady was a fairy, and could have made him a great deal happier than he had been for a long time; but he was too much taken up with himself and his troubles to discover this fact, and after a while he got restless and wandered off again. But before he went, he promised that, if he lived, he would come back when the leaves turned brown."

By this time Brown Pink was sitting straight up again, with his eyes wide open, and now there were no tears in them. Mr. Penfold stroked his curly head, much as he had stroked the Beast's, and went on.

"All this time there had been living in a cool,

green country far away, a most charming Princess. She was just the opposite of the Prince in every way, for instead of losing friends, she made more every day; and instead of growing richer, she grew poorer; so one day she too set off to seek her fortune. Strangely enough she came to the house of the kind old Fairy, and asked to be taken in, as the Prince had done; but, whereas he had only been received from pity, she was so sweet and winning and sunshiny that the kind old Fairy took a fancy to her at once, and not only gave her a room, but welcomed her to her own apartments and gave her the most delicious things to eat. There was a magic power about this Princess, so that whoever saw her smile fell straightway deep in love with her, and never afterwards could be really happy except in her presence; and this was what happened to a little Brownie who belonged to the old Fairy. Instead of sitting by the fire all day, or looking at wonderful pictures, he began to run up and down stairs, and help the Princess with her work; for people who seek their fortunes always have work to do, and the Princess was very industrious indeed."

Brown Pink chuckled. He said not a word, but a very knowing light flashed into his eyes, and he

clasped his hands tighter and tighter, so interested was he.

"Meantime," pursued Mr. Penfold, with a light in his own eyes, "the leaves had turned brown, and, sure enough, the Prince came back. But he was an unsociable fellow in those days, so he just shut himself up in his room, and it might have been long enough before he knew any better, but for the good little Brownie. What do you think the Brownie did?

Brown Pink shook his head and looked expectant.

"Well, then, I must tell you. He made the Princess laugh. And if her smile was magical, her laugh was still more so. Of course the Prince heard this merry laugh ringing all through the house, and he fell in love with her on the instant. He could n't help it; people are powerless against such magic, you know. He looked all through his big books to see if there was not some counter charm which would help him, but there was not one; and besides, as luck would have it, he met the Princess on the stairs the very next day, and that finished him. But now a fresh difficulty presented itself. The Princess would never have anything to do with him unless the old Fairy introduced them, that was cer-

tain; and he had kept so stubbornly out of the way that the old Fairy knew nothing about him, or so he thought. He turned the matter over and over in his mind, and the more he turned it, the more he became convinced that the Brownie was the only person who could help him; so he opened the door and listened, and presently he heard the Brownie coming upstairs."

"And he called him in," cried Brown Pink, clapping his hands, "and they became friends, and then the Prince went to see the old Fairy, and she in—in—duced him to the Princess!"

Mr. Penfold burst out laughing, and Miss Dorry, who had come downstairs in time to hear most of the story, laughed too.

"He did n't need much inducement, William," said Mr. Penfold; "but you don't know it all yet, though you may think you do. The important point of my story lies in the fact that it was all the Brownie's doing. If he had been mischievous, and rough, as many brownies are, the Princess never would have allowed him to come into her room, and he never would have made her laugh. And if he had been the least bit selfish or cowardly, or careless of other people's feelings he never could have helped the Prince. So you see the Prince and Prin-

cess, who, by the way, are both quite happy now, owe everything to the Brownie, and are afraid that if he should leave them, they might become unhappy again. So, to finish my story, which you most disrespectfully interrupted, they have persuaded the kind old Fairy, who proved to have known all the Prince's relatives before he knew them himself, that the wisest thing in the world will be for her to come to the castle to live; and for the Prince and Princess, and the Brownie and the Beast, to spend the rest of their lives together and be 'happy ever after.' What does the Brownie say?"

The Brownie said absolutely nothing. He stared at Mr. Penfold, with eyes that grew bigger and bigger, till all at once he flung both arms about his neck, as he had flung them about the Beast's neck a week before, and laid his head down, as then, in happiness too deep for words. Mr. Penfold looked at Miss Dorry, and Miss Dorry looked at Mr. Penfold, and then she softly knelt down and laid her face beside Brown Pink's, and every one was very still for a long time.

CHAPTER XII

"FAREWELL!"

NANNIE was growing, fast. She was past twelve now, and the tally which Nurse Craik kept so faithfully on the edge of the nursery door had mounted nearly two inches since September. It was March; the last snowdrifts had left roadside and pasture to float about in the clear, cool blue above; the snowdrops were hanging bashful heads in the garden, and bolder crocuses were preparing to follow. The bluebirds were out, and so were the pussy willows; all the world was waking to busy, happy life, and in the Emerald Palace, as in the world without, was a vast deal of business, a vast deal of happiness, and also inevitable sorrow. The Beautiful Princess was going to be married; she was going away. To be sure, when autumn returned and the Prince's leave of absence expired, she would come back again and all would go on as before; for the sea-fairies claimed so much of the Prince's time, and Nannie was such an important member of the

family, that no change was to be made in their way of living for the present. Every one told the little sister how fortunate she was to gain so much and lose nothing; other little girls were not so favored. But Nannie knew what she had gained better than any one could tell her; and she knew what she was losing, too. One of the great breaks in life had come to her; to her alone. No one else in all the world had her burden to bear; no one in all the world could help her bear it. She shed no tears: that was never Nannie's way; she threw no shadow of selfishness or complaint upon her Beautiful's bright pathway; but every day she grew a little thinner, a little paler, a little more womanly, and constantly taller. "The long vacation will be good for her," said the Old Queen; "she has studied hard, and she is growing hard; she needs a rest."

If she needed it, she was not yet ready to take it. Never had she been more diligent in her lessons, in her music. Her slender brown fingers had always flashed swiftly and unerringly over the pearl keys of the old spinet; but now there began to creep into her playing a tenderness and pathos that were remarkable in the work of so young a musician. The Princess studied her quietly, and felt a growing reverence added to her already devoted affection for

the rich nature so unobtrusive in its unfolding. "Nannie breaks my heart," she said to the Prince; "her character is so strong and sweet that it seems almost unearthly."

"She is a charming child," replied the Prince, "and she will make a charming woman; but there is nothing of the wan seraph about Nannie; she has good red blood, and plenty of common sense." Which, as Nurse Craik would have said, was "just like a man." Princes are but men, after all. The Princess smiled, and held her peace.

Nannie came to her sister one day with a little green morocco case in her hand. "Here is your wedding present, Beautiful," she said; and the Princess touched the spring. Then she looked up at Nannie, speechless, touched to the heart. Not even the Prince had thought of doing this; though it was his own face, most beautifully painted, and set about with a single row of pearls. Only Nannie had remembered that the little old daguerreotype was long since outgrown; only Nannie had known what, of all else, would be priceless in her sister's eyes; only Nannie could so put another first as to fathom the very depths of a feeling which had given her the second place. And she had her reward, although the extent of it was never known to

her. She went away happy in the knowledge of the happiness that she had given; but she never dreamed that in all her life long the Princess would never touch that spring, or look upon the treasure within, save with a leap of the heart that was first of all for the little giver, and a sudden vision, swifter than that of the eyes, of a small, grave face set in clustering chestnut curls, and dark eyes that looked bravely, lovingly, self-forgetfully into hers. They never lost that look through all the days of preparation; through the great day itself, when all the world, Nannie's world, was there to see and wonder how the child would bear it. She bore it well; so well that people with short sight, of whom there are always plenty, thought it could not be such an ordeal to her, after all. No one knew what Nannie thought; no one realized that for her it was an ending, — the closing of a door which could never again be opened; that, however many and bright might be the years of youth before her, one quality, ethereal, unspeakable, was taken away. She might be, Heaven send she should be, a glad young girl, a radiant woman; but with this first conscious break in the even tenor of her life, her happy, cloudless childhood was forever at an end.

"Queen," she said, when the carriage had rolled

away and all the guests were gone, "I am going to the woods." She laid aside her dainty wedding-gear, and put on an old brown dress which she had not worn for months. It was short for her now, but no one would see. In the pocket were still some of the butternuts which she had put there for her squirrel so long ago. Her lips quivered a little when she felt them there, but she would not throw them away. Nothing mattered much, just now. Life was hard all through, to-day. She went slowly up the lane, softly past Miss Betty's door, and slowly down the hill. She had not been that way before for weeks. The grass was green along by the old stone walls where the sun lay warmest; the tree buds were swelling with the powers of growth which pressed within them, and underfoot there was a constant intangible stir and gurgle, as if old Mother Earth were waking from her long trance and beginning to breathe and drink. To those who love her, Nature is wondrous kind. She lays a cool, quiet hand upon tired heads and soothes their aching; she pours a thousand sweet balms into lonely hearts and stills their pain. Nannie felt the nameless influence about her, and it comforted her as nothing else could have done. There was one big, bountiful breast upon which she could always

rest; one friend who never overlooked or misunderstood. She drew a long breath when she came to the bar place, and walked faster. The brook was waiting for her, the brook would help her. She could hear its music even now. Hark! What was that? She could hear something else, too, — a short, quick, strident little bark. Nannie stopped short and stood stock-still, hardly daring to breathe, lest she should believe something that could not be; hardly daring to look, lest she should find that something was not which she could not help believing. The brook came rushing along just before her, the silver water singing on its way; and through the long brown pasture-grass something else came rushing, too. Rushing, leaping, flying! Suddenly a bit of the brook seemed to rise from its pebbles; a long, slender silver streak shot swiftly through the air and landed on her shoulder, a feathery brush swept her cheek, a sharp voice chattered in her ear. Quirlicue had come back!

Nannie simply dropped upon the broad stepping-stone and gathered the gray Prince into her arms. He uttered no excuses, felt no regret, apparently, for all the trouble he had caused her. Here he was again, — glad to see her, glad to see the spring, glad to see some more butternuts, which he was by no

means slow in nosing out. He darted from shoulder to pocket, from pocket to shoulder, in his old way; jerking his fluffy gray tail, stuffing his sleek gray cheeks; nibbling, squeaking, full of energy and life. And Nannie sat motionless and let him rampage. She spoke not a word, made not a motion, after that first ecstatic hug. It was the straw too much. Her little heart had more than it could bear. The big, bright tears which no pain or grief could ever wring from her sprang to her eyes at this sharp touch of joy, and for a while it was a question whether they or the brook ran faster.

She remembered, presently, that the Princess would not like her to be on that cold, damp stone, and changed her seat for one on a fallen tree; but that was the only move she made for a whole long hour. Quirlicue finished his nuts, tore up and down the oak-trees, chattered and frisked, and ran all over her; but still she sat there, silent, sometimes stroking her little gray prodigal, sometimes following for a moment the flight of a passing bird; but for the most part looking far off to the steadfast hills, and drinking in, with wistful ears, the ceaseless, clear, courageous wander-song of the brook. When the sun lay low along the farthest treetops, she rose, and with Quirlicue on her shoulder retraced

THE BIG, BRIGHT TEARS . . . SPRANG TO HER EYES

her steps across the brook and along the meadow path. At the hollow birch she paused, as of old, and threw the parting nut. The squirrel sped away. She watched him till she saw him safe once more in his home tree; then turned, and through the golden sunset light went bravely back to face and conquer her strange new life in the empty Emerald Palace.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 10020 090 4